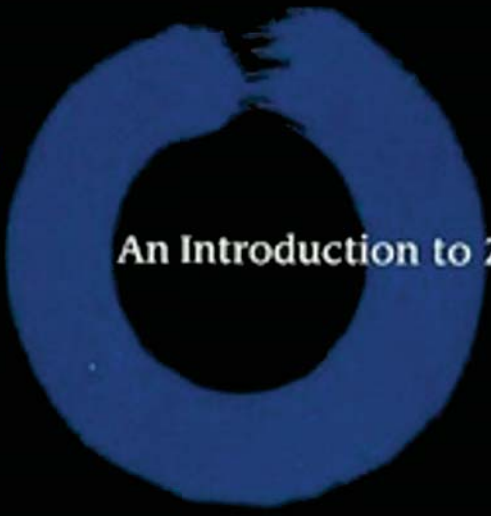
SOTO ZEN



An Introduction to Zazen

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SŌTŌ ZEN

An Introduction to *Zazen*

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Part I

Practice of *Zazen*

1 | *A Path of Just Sitting:* Zazen *as the Practice of the Bodhisattva Way*

Shohaku Okumura

A Personal Reflection on *Zazen* Practice in Modern Times

Problems we are facing

The 20th century was scarred by two World Wars, a Cold War between powerful nations, and countless regional conflicts of great violence. Millions were killed, and millions more displaced from their homes. All the developed nations were involved in these wars and conflicts. In a sense this violence goes along with a process of change in which separate nations have become one vast world society linked by economics, technology, communication and transportation.

Secular materialism based on economics, science, and technology has been a driving force. At the beginning of the 21st century, although there are great differences in wealth and standards of living, all nations are bound up in an interdependent relationship. No one can live apart from the influence of other parts of the world.

My own journey towards truth

When I was a teenager in the 1960s, the basic message I received at school and in the wider Japanese society was that, as an outgrowth of technological development, humanist education, and democracy, our world was getting better. The optimistic beliefs of secularism and materialism were rooted in the 17th and 18th century, Europe's so-called the age of Enlightenment. People believed that through science and rationality we could control nature, and make a world free from the suffering of poverty, sickness, and discrimination.

In the Japan of my childhood, soon after World War Two, people were still extremely poor. As food became more generally available, Japanese people were determined to work hard to make Japan rich once more. In the 70s and 80s, the Japanese economy seemed unstoppable, and some thought Japan was destined be the 21st century's richest nation.

But even in the 60s many people were beginning to question the basic beliefs of materialism. When I was in high school Japanese society seemed like a huge moneymaking machine. Schools had become factories, producing parts for this machine, instead of offering young people a place where they might study the important truths of human life. My parents and teachers taught me that success was about becoming a useful part of the machine. We studied very hard to enter prestigious colleges in order to get good jobs. I found no meaning in this kind of life.

I often escaped the classroom and went to the library to read books on philosophy, religion, and literature from Eastern and Western traditions. I wished to understand the purpose of life. The more books I read, the deeper my question became, and yet I could not find any satisfactory answers.

In translation I read Existentialist philosophy, poetry by the American Beats, *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, Chinese Taoist classics, etc. In 1965, a classmate recommended Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi's book *The Self—Religion Without Sectarianism,* in which he described his own search for truth and meaning in life. In college and graduate school, Uchiyama Roshi had studied Western philosophy. He became a teacher at a Catholic seminary where he taught philosophy and mathematics. While there he studied Catholic theology. Finally he became a Buddhist monk and practiced *zazen* under the guidance of Kōdō Sawaki Rōshi.

As a seventeen-year-old high school student, I did not understand the answer he had found—*zazen* practiced according to Dōgen Zenji's teaching of buddha-dharma. But I could see that he and I had the same question about the meaning of life. He had turned his life into a search for the truth. When he found it, he continued to deepen his practice and teach others. Though I had read the writings of many Eastern and

Western spiritual teachers, Uchiyama Roshi was the first actual person I knew who lived that way. I wanted to live like him and to become his disciple. Even though I knew nothing about Buddhism or Zen, I was compelled to take up the practice of *zazen.*

I went to Komazawa University in 1968 to study Buddhism and Dōgen Zenji's teachings. Uchiyama Roshi ordained me in 1970, when I was twenty-two. Since then I have been following the path of just sitting according to Dōgen Zenji's teachings and Uchiyama Roshi's instruction.

Questioning modern civilization

In the early 70s, Uchiyama Roshi wrote about Zen for Westerners. There were many Westerners who lived in Kyoto and came to his temple, Antaiji, to practice. Because he had studied Western Philosophy and theology, he aspired to present Dōgen Zenji's *zazen* practice in a way that Westerners might understand. Among these writings were "Modern Civilization and Zen" and "The Reality of *Zazen*" (both writings were translated into English and included in *Opening the Hand of Thought,* translated by Shohaku Okumura and Tom Wright, Penguin Arkana, 1993).

At the beginning of "Modern Civilization and Zen," Uchiyama Roshi introduced a humorous Japanese story. A comical fellow named Hachikō had just begun to learn horseback riding. The horse was not under his control. As they passed along busy street, the horse started to eat carrots at a vegetable stand. The shop owner got angry and hit the horse with a stick. The horse was surprised and started to gallop. Hachikō held on to the mane of the horse, just trying not to be thrown. A friend of his happened to be walking down the same street. The friend asked Hachikō, "Hey, Where are you going?" Hachikō replied, "I don't know. Ask the horse!"

Uchiyama Roshi commented that modern people are like Hachikō. We try to pursue efficiency, but really we don't know where we are going. We work hard to make money, and enjoy the fruits of science and technology, but we don't know where our lives are headed. Uchiyama Roshi raised a question and responded himself:

"Hey, mankind! Why are you making H-bombs and guided missiles?"

"I don't know. But somehow we seem to have fallen into this plan of human annihilation."

Our situation today is exactly like poor Hachikō's frantic ride on that galloping horse. While courting progress, we lack the power to control it. Consequently, the direction in which to proceed is unclear. Though we run around crying "Efficiency! Efficiency!" and make every effort to be more efficient, living in our splendid, modern civilization, where are we to settle?

This was the basic question he asked of modern civilization. More than 30 years have passed since Uchiyama Roshi raised this question. Now we are in the 21st century. During the last 30 years much has changed. The Soviet Union dissolved, and the Cold War—which threatened nuclear annihilation—ended. We expected the world would become more peaceful. But we still have so many dangers and tragedies. September 11, 2001 showed us how commercial airplanes could become weapons of terrible destructive power. Even the World Trade Center, symbolizing the riches of the world's most developed and prosperous country, was vulnerable. With weapons like these, fashioned out of everyday technology, we see that we may be killed whenever and wherever we are. This is different from wars in the past. Without any declaration of the war, our workplaces and homes can become a battlefield.

Beyond conflicts among people, we are destroying nature itself, the earth which is the only home of living beings. One thing has become clear: now we know our destination. Unless we change the direction of human civilization, our destination is human annihilation, with or without a nuclear war, and an end to much of this planet's life.

It sometimes seems that human civilization is like cancer. Cancer is nothing other than a part of our body that does not follow the natural order. Cancer grows as it wishes, in disharmony with other parts of the body. Finally cancer is uncontrolled, destroying the entire system. The body has to die. Because the cancer itself is still a part of the body, it also has to die. Our lives as humans have aspects in common with cancer. We

work hard just for the sake of our own happiness and satisfaction. Pursuing the satisfaction of desire is considered a basic right in modern society. In the realm of desire we feel we have the right to do anything so long as it is legal. But human activity based on desire causes our problems, and has been steadily destroying the living network of interdependent origination on this planet. Some living beings are thoughtlessly used by humans. Others face extinction as the environment they need for survival disappears. Still we keep working hard. What is our destination? Can we change the destructive path of civilization? Have we found any satisfactory answer to the question raised by Uchiyama Roshi 30 years ago?

What can we do?

Of course many people have awakened to the dangers, and make efforts to help. They work to protect the environment, end war, bring peace, promote human rights, eliminate discrimination, and so on.

I have been wondering—as a disciple of Uchiyama Roshi, Dōgen Zenji and the Buddha, and simply as a member of society—what can I do? What can I offer? Honestly, I have not found anything better than what has been given us by the Buddha, Dōgen Zenji and other Buddhist teachers. That is, to practice the Noble Eightfold Path (right view, right thinking, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right *samadhi*), the Six *Paramitas* or Perfections (offering, precepts, patience, diligence, *samadhi,* wisdom), and the Bodhisattva's Four Embracing Dharmas—*Bodaisatta Shishobo*—giving, loving speech, beneficial action, and identity action).

Studying the self

Uchiyama Roshi urged us to find the reality of self by settling in the self, instead of seeking happiness and satisfaction by gaining things or by comparing and competing with others.

The Buddha said, "Live in the world relying on the Self alone as a foundation, be freed from all things, depending on no thing." (*Suttanipatta*)

"The foundation of the Self is only Self."

"Take refuge in Self, take refuge in Dharma, take refuge in nothing else."(*Dhammapada*)

Dōgen Zenji also said, "To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self."

Vow and repentance

When we study the self, and understand that we are interconnected with all beings, when we become Buddha's students, we repent all the harmful karma we have done in the past born of our body, speech and thought. We need to practice repentance moment by moment whenever we see ourselves deviating from a wholesome way of life.

Again and again we take refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and we renew the four bodhisattva vows:

Beings are numberless; I vow to free them.
Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them.
Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them.
The buddha way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it.

These vows guide us on the buddha way. We take one small step at a time, and still find that our practice is incomplete. These vows never end. Sentient beings are numberless, so we cannot save them all. Delusions are inexhaustible, so we never completely end them. Dharma gates are boundless, so we can never enter them all. The buddha way is unsurpassable, so our practice continues endlessly. When we take those vows and practice sincerely, we understand that we are incomplete.

In another sense, taking these vows, we vow not to cross the river to the other shore. We vow to be the last person to go there. That is why we call these bodhisattva vows. If all people are bodhisattvas, then there is no one on the other shore. All bodhisattvas work on this shore that we call samsara. Using our body and mind in practice, we try to make this very world into the other shore. And because body and mind have limitations, our practice has also limitations.

This is why we need to practice repentance. Just chanting the verse of repentance once on the occasion of a precepts ceremony is not enough.

Even though we take refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we are forgetful. Even if we understand that we live with all beings in a network of interdependent origination, we often deviate from it, and are caught up in egocentric thinking and doing. Whenever we become aware that we are deviating from the proper path, we should just return to the right direction. This returning is important.

This is also what we do in *zazen.* Sitting upright, breathing deeply and quietly, keeping our eyes open, not sleeping, letting go of whatever arises from mind: this is the point we return to whenever we wander. We return to the point billions of times.

In daily life, we practice the same way. We continue to study the self. Since each of us is unique, we take personal vows to bring the four bodhisattva vows to life. When we find ourselves wandering, we return to our bodhisattva vows. The 16 precepts show us the way. Our practice is possible because of our awareness and repentance. Repentance is the energy that helps us to make a new start.

I am a Buddhist priest and a *zazen* practitioner, born, educated and trained in Japan. My teacher encouraged me to study English and practice *zazen* with Westerners in America. I also study with Americans, translating the works of Dōgen Zenji and Uchiyama Roshi. These have become my personal vows for this lifetime. I have been making every effort to realize them.

Each of us needs to make personal vows based on our talents and abilities. We don't need to be a Buddhist priest. We don't even need to be *zazen* practitioners. Whether we are schoolteachers, lawyers, farmers, or mechanics—through our work and through our family life, we can find a wholesome way to benefit all living beings. Through our activities we can make this world healthier place. I believe that this is our practice as bodhisattvas in the modern age. There is no secret method to resolve all the problems we face, but each of us can take vows, practice repentance, and continue to make our own small but steady efforts. And I believe that in order to live this way, *zazen* practice, as taught by Dōgen Zenji, is a great help.

The Simple but Profound Practice of *Zazen*

The place for *zazen*

In *Shōbōgenzō Zazengi,* Dōgen Zenji wrote:

> "*Sanzen* is *zazen.* A quiet place is suitable for *zazen.* Put down a thick mat. Do not allow drafts or mist to enter; do not allow rain or dew to leak in. Protect the place where you put your body. There are historical traces of ancient sages sitting on a diamond seat or on a large rock. They all laid down thick grass and sat on it. Keep the place where you sit well lit; it should be dark neither by day nor by night. It is essential to keep it warm in winter and cool in summer."

Although it is ideal to find a quiet and warm place in the winter and a cool place in the summer, this is not always possible. Sometimes we need to practice the perfection (*paramita*) of patience as we experience traffic noise, neighborhood activities and so on. But whenever possible, we try to find a comfortable place to sit.

The place for *zazen* should be kept clean and neat. It is good to create an altar with a Buddha or Bodhisattva image. In the formal *sōdō* or monks' hall where monks practice *zazen* in a Zen monastery, the statue of Manjusri is enshrined on an altar at the center of the hall. A candle, flowers, and incense are offered to create a sacred and peaceful atmosphere. When we sit, the space is also practicing *zazen* with us. Our *zazen* and the place we sit are one. The same is true of our lives and our environment.

Posture, breathing and mind in *zazen*

Posture, breathing and mind are the basis of *zazen.* This book discusses all these fundamental aspects of practice. Dōgen Zenji described three ways to harmonize breathing in *zazen:* breath counting (or *susoku-kan*); watching the breath, (*zuisoku-kan*); and neither counting nor watching the breath.

I heard an American Sōtō Zen teacher say that Shunryū Suzuki Roshi

(founder of San Francisco Zen Center) taught breath counting, Dainin Katagiri Roshi (the founder of Minnesota Zen Meditation Center) taught watching the breath, and Kōshō Uchiyama Roshi (in his book *Opening the Hand of Thought*) taught doing nothing but breathing naturally as we forget breathing. How is one to choose among these approaches?

Sōtō Zen teachers practice and teach in various ways. Each teacher practices his or her own style. Since I am a disciple of Uchiyama Roshi, my own instruction is based on his approach to *zazen*—neither counting nor watching the breath. It seems to me this is what Dōgen Zenji describes in *Eihei-kōroku* when he says that inhaling or exhaling are neither long nor short. Whichever practice one follows, it is important to breathe through the nose deeply, smoothly and quietly as the air goes to the *tanden* (lower part of abdomen) and rises with one's exhalation.

What does it mean to concentrate if one doesn't count or watch the breath? Uchiyama Roshi often compared sitting *zazen* to driving a car. When we drive, it is dangerous to sleep or to be caught up in thinking. It is also dangerous to concentrate one's mind on an object like the brake pedal, the gas pedal, or the steering wheel. We concentrate our entire body and mind on the whole process of driving a car. Our sitting is the same. We don't set our mind on any particular object, visualization, mantra, or even our breath itself. When we just sit, our mind is nowhere and everywhere. Then we can say that our body and mind is concentrated in just sitting. Sitting mindfully, whenever we deviate from upright posture, deep and smooth breathing, awakening and letting go of thought, we just return to the point.

Beyond thinking

In his *Fukan Zazengi* ("Universally Recommended Instruction for *Zazen*"), *Shōbōgenzō Zazengi* ("Instruction for *Zazen*") and *Shōbōgenzō Zazenshin* ("Acupuncture Needle of *Zazen*"), Dōgen Zenji quotes a dialogue between a monk and Chinese Zen Master Yakusan Igen (Yaoshan Weiyan, 745–828). And he said that this *koan* expresses the essential art of *zazen.* The dialogue is as follows.

As Yakusan was sitting, a monk asked, "What is thinking (*shiryō*) in steadfast immovable sitting?"
The Master replied, "Thinking (*shiryō*) of not-thinking (*fu-shiryō*)."
The monk asked, "How is thinking of not-thinking?"
The Master said, "Beyond thinking (*hi-shiryō*)."

Here are thinking (*shiryō*), not-thinking *(fu-shiryō*), and beyond-thinking (*hi-shiryō*). When we discuss the mind in *zazen* (*shikantaza*) we need to understand these three words. Thinking is the function of mind. Thinking or *shiryō* is not limited to intellectual, rational thought; it includes feeling, emotion, and more. In *Fukan Zazengi,* Dōgen Zenji said, "Put aside the operation of your intellect, volition and consciousness." The original words Dōgen Zenji used are *shin* (Pali: *citta*), *i* (*manas*) and *shiki* (*vijnana*). In early Buddhism, these three words are used alternatively as names for the discriminating mind that makes distinctions among objects. Later, in Yogacara teachings, *shin* (*citta*) refers to the eighth consciousness—*alaya. I* (*manas*) refers to the seventh consciousness, *mana.* And the *shiki* refers to the first six layers of consciousness that we think of as ordinary mind.

In *zazen* we put aside the operation of all these layers of mind. Even though we put them aside, the mind functions by itself in each moment, even in our sleep. The stream of consciousness is like a waterfall. It constantly flows but has no permanent nature or self.

As we sit in *zazen* posture, our stomach is digesting food we have eaten. Our heart is beating and blood circulates. Our entire body functions of its accord. And our brain is producing thoughts. Even in *zazen,* thoughts arise naturally.

When we sit facing the wall, there is nothing in front of us as object. There is only the wall. We have no object in our mind because we don't visualize anything, don't concentrate on a mantra, and don't pay any special attention to the breath. We just sit. Still many different kinds of thought come and go naturally. It is very clear that thoughts, emotions, and daydreams are illusions like bubbles rising in water. We let go of them. No clinging to them, chasing after them, or pushing them away. We really do nothing but sit.

This is what Dōgen Zenji meant when he says "thinking of not-

thinking." We cannot say that there is no thinking. And we cannot say that we are thinking. "Thinking of not-thinking" is the precise expression of the reality of mind in *zazen.* It is like a car engine idling. When the transmission is in neutral, even though the engine is moving, the car does not move. Even though thoughts are coming and going, we take no action based on those thoughts. Thoughts are simply idling. We don't create karma. This is what Dōgen Zenji meant in *Zuimonki* when he said *zazen* is the true form of the self and non-doing or not-action (*fui*).

According to the Yogacara School of Buddhist psychology, all our experiences (karma) are stored in the *alaya* consciousness as seeds. *Alaya* means storehouse. When we encounter an object, each of us conceives the object differently and takes action in a unique way, depending upon seeds which have been stored away in the past. Since we don't have objects in *zazen,* and we don't grasp any thoughts rising from our consciousness, we don't make karma. We are not under control of the seventh consciousness, which cling to the contents of the *alaya* as "me" and influence the first six layers of consciousness to see and think in an ego-centered way. The seventh layer of consciousness is considered to be the source of egocentricity.

Another expression of what is going on in our mind is what the monk said next, "How is thinking of not-thinking." Dōgen Zenji interpreted these words not as a question, but as a statement of what is actually going on in *zazen.* Dōgen's understanding of "how" is reality itself, beyond any verbal or conceptual expression. We can only say, "how," "what."

Then Yakusan said, "*Hi-shiryō*" or "beyond thinking." Both *hi* and *fu* are negatives. Often *fu* is used to negate a verb and *hi* is used to negate a noun. In the case of *fu-shiryō, shiryō* is a verb. And the *shiryō* in *hi-shiryō* is a noun. *Shiryō* and *fu-shiryō* negate each other as an opposition in a dichotomy. When we do "thinking," we cannot do "not-thinking." When we don't think, we cannot think. But *hi-shiryō* negates both, and at the same time includes both. This is why I translate it as "beyond thinking" instead of "non-thinking."

Coming and going within the realm of beyond thinking

In *Shōbōgenzō Zazenshin,* Dōgen Zenji said, "In order to think (*shiryō*) of not-thinking (*fu-shiryō*), we use beyond-thinking (*hi-shiryō*). This means that what is happening in our *zazen* is not a matter of thinking or not-thinking. We "do" nothing; neither "to think" nor "not to think." We put our entire self on the ground of beyond-thinking. On that ground, sometimes many thoughts come up, sometimes, no thoughts arise.

Dōgen Zenji said in *Genjōkoan,* "Conveying oneself towards things in order to carry out practice/enlightenment is delusion. All things coming forth and carrying out practice/enlightenment through the self is realization." This is what I mean by placing our entire being on the ground of beyond-thinking. Such action is not personal activity to fulfill desire.

In our *zazen,* thoughts are like clouds. Sometimes, peaceful white clouds appear, moving slowly, changing shapes, and eventually disappearing into the blue sky. Sometimes we have gloomy sky covered with thick gray clouds. Sometimes the sky is completely covered with black clouds. Sometimes, there are storms and lightning. Sometimes the sky is completely blue. Depending upon causes and conditions, we experience many different kinds of weather in our mind when we sit.

But we don't control the weather. In *zazen,* our body and mind is like the vast sky, receptive to all change. We just keep an upright posture and let go of any kind of thoughts. We don't identify any of the clouds as "myself." We understand that no cloud stays forever. And we trust that above the clouds, there is always a blue sky and bright sun. But we need to live beneath the clouds. We need to experience different kinds of weather. We try to live without being overwhelmed by any condition. This is what we learn from *zazen.*

Thought is like a map

"Thought" is an incomplete copy of the reality created by our mind. We don't see reality as it is. When we see something we like, it looks much bigger than it is. When we see something we hate, it also looks bigger than it is. When we see something we don't much care about, it looks smaller than it is. At times we don't even see what is right in front of our

eyes. Our view of the world is created by mind and distorted by our likes and dislikes, the degree of our interest, the side or the position we feel we occupy.

In Japanese schools, we studied geography using an atlas made in Japan. In this map of the world, Japan is always in the center. On the right side of the atlas, there is the Pacific Ocean, North and South Americas. On the other side of the map, there is Eurasia and Africa. When I came to the United State in 1975 and settled in Massachusetts, I felt like I was on the edge of the world because New England is really the right edge of a Japanese atlas. Everyday, when I saw the sun set in the west, I thought of Japan. Japan was also at the center of my psychological world. I spent entire lifetime there. All good and bad experiences, joyful or sorrowful memories were part of my Japan. It was very difficult to let go of this image of the world.

A few years later, I had a chance to visit a Japanese family in the U.S. Their two children went to an American public school. In the children's room, I found a world atlas made in America. I was surprised. The center of the world was the USA. Right then, I understood that wherever we are now is the center of the world. Because the earth is a sphere like a ball there is no center or the edge. Or we can say anywhere we are now is really the center of the world. Each and every one of us is the center of the world. It is important point to remember that not only "me, " but also all other peoples are the center of the world.

But because an atlas or a map is flat, it has only two dimensions, so something is always distorted. In some maps, Green Land is bigger than the USA. The shape of Antarctica is completely distorted. The world created by thought is the same. The shape, size, or directions are not like the real thing.

Our view is distorted by our egocentricity. If we think the map is real and accurate, we make a mistake. Our own view is an incomplete copy of the world we experience. If we grasp our view as the absolutely right view, we make a mistake. We cannot live harmoniously with others whose maps of the world are created by their own karma or conditioned experiences.

When we study how an atlas is made and how it is distorted, it becomes a useful tool for understanding reality. We study how our views

are formed. Then we can try to correct the distortion. We also learn by listening to others, working together, and sharing experiences. That is how we can make our worldview more accurate, flexible, and realistic.

Zazen is not correcting the distorted map

But our *zazen* is not simply a way to correct distorted views. We let go of maps and sit on the real ground of reality with our whole body and mind. In *zazen,* we even let go of thoughts about the Buddha's teachings.

As a karmic being, I am a Japanese Buddhist priest, my parents' son, my wife's husband, and my children's father. In *zazen,* I sit facing the wall, letting go of all thoughts. I am not Japanese, not Buddhist, not a priest, not a son, not a husband, not a father. I am just "who am." This "who am" is never grasped as an object. To see this "who am" without grasping or without using concepts is manifesting *prajna* (wisdom), just being present with "who am."

This *zazen* itself is *prajna*—seeing the emptiness of all things as they are, without our mind's incomplete map of the world. The very first sentence of the *Heart Sutra* says: "Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, when *deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw* that all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering." We can clearly see that prajna is something to practice. It is not a technique for using our brain. In this practice of prajna, we have no subject and no object. Everything is just as it is. Avalokitesvara is nothing other than the five aggregates. Five aggregates see the five aggregates as empty. Avalokitesvara sees himself as empty. When we let go of thought and put our entire being on the ground of beyond-thinking, the great reality beyond separation into subject and object manifests itself.

In our daily lives, we try to study from teachers and books to correct the distortions of self-centeredness. But in *zazen* we let go of all thoughts, even thoughts of making corrections.

Zazen as both negation and embrace

Our *zazen* is letting go of thought. As Dōgen said in *Fukan Zazengi* it is the negation of everything arising from human mind. And *zazen* is also embracing everything, including delusions and distorted thoughts. But

because we let go of delusion, it cannot harm us. When we see delusion as delusion, we are not deceived by delusion.

Our practice of just sitting is the practice of bodhisattva vows and repentance. Buddhas and ancestors' *zazen* is the vow to save all living beings. Dōgen Zenji recorded his teacher Tendō Nyojō (Tiantong Rujing)'s teaching on *zazen* practice of buddhas and ancestors in *Hōkyōki.* He said that the buddhas and ancestors practice *zazen* in order to save all living beings with great compassion.

> In buddhas-ancestors' *zazen,* from the moment they first arouse bodhi-mind, they wish to gather up the entire buddha-dharma. Therefore in their *zazen,* they never forget or abandon living beings. They always devote compassionate thoughts to beings, even to insects. They wish and vow to save them and dedicate all the merits [of their practice] to all living beings. For this reason, the buddhas and ancestors always practice *zazen* and engage the Way in the realm of desire.

Dōgen Zenji urges us to practice in the same attitude with the buddhas and ancestors.

Our *zazen* practice is also a practice of repentance. To see delusion as delusion and not to cling to them is repentance. Whenever we are aware of deviation from upright posture, abdominal breath, awakening and letting go of thought, we simply return to the point. This act of awareness and return is the practice of repentance. One of Dōgen's students, Kyōgō wrote in his commentary on the bodhisattva precepts:

> In seeing and hearing buddha-dharma, practicing repentance is the first attainment of buddha-dharma. In understanding the dharma of repentance, you should know that 'the buddha-seed arises from interdependent origination' means that 'interdependent origination arises from the buddha-seed.' In doing so, we are in accord with repentance of the true reality.

And Kyōgō introduced a verse from *Samantabhadra-Sutra.*

The ocean of all karmic hindrances
arises solely from delusive thoughts.
If you want to make repentance,
sit in upright posture and be mindful of the true reality.
All misdemeanors are like frost and dews.
The sun of wisdom allows them to melt away.

Within reality as it is, delusion is included. Our practice is not a technique to get rid of delusions. But by keeping an upright posture, without either rejecting or chasing after anything, we are not controlled by delusive thoughts. Enlightenment is not a matter of this deluded person awakening to reality, but that reality itself awakens to reality. Our practice of *zazen* is the bodhisattva practice of vow and repentance.

2 | *How to Do* Zazen

The place

When you do *zazen,* find a quiet place where you can sit without disturbances. It should be neither too dark nor too bright, warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The sitting place should be neat and clean.

If possible, a statue of Manjushri Bodhisattva should be enshrined in the room. If there is none available, any statue or painting of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva is fine. Also, when possible, place an offering of flowers on the altar and burn incense.

Preparing yourself

Avoid sitting when you haven't had sufficient sleep or when you are physically exhausted. Before sitting, eat moderately and avoid alcohol. Wash your face and feet so that you feel refreshed.

Clothing

Avoid wearing soiled clothing or garments which are luxurious or expensive. It is also advisable to avoid heavy garments. Wear your clothing loosely but neatly. In Japanese Zen monasteries, socks are not worn in the *zendō.*

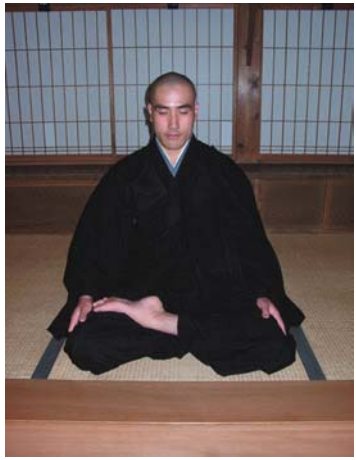
Position of the *zafu*

Place a thick mat (*zabuton*) in front of the wall and put a *zafu* on it. Sit down, placing the base of your spine at the center of the *zafu* so that half of the *zafu* is behind you. After crossing your legs, rest your knees firmly on the *zabuton.*

Crossing your legs (1): *kekkafuza* (full-lotus position)

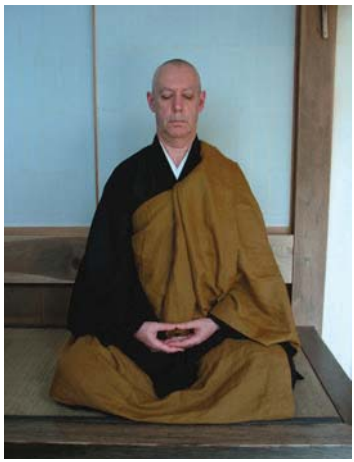
Place your right foot on your left thigh, and then your left foot on your right thigh. Cross your legs so that the tips of your toes and the outer edge of your thighs form a single line.

Crossing your legs (2): *hankafuza* (half-lotus position)



Simply place your left foot on your right thigh. When you cross your legs, your knees and the base of your spine should form an equilateral triangle. These three points support the weight of your body. In *kekkafuza,* the order of crossing the legs may be reversed, and in *hankafuza,* raising the opposite leg is acceptable.

Posture



Rest both knees firmly on the *zabuton,* straighten the lower part of your back, push your buttocks outward and hips forward, and straighten your spine. Pull in your chin and extend your neck as though reaching toward the ceiling. Your ears should be in a line parallel to your shoulders, and your nose should be in line with your navel. After straightening your back, relax your shoulders, back, and abdomen without changing your posture. Sit upright, leaning neither to the left nor right, neither forward nor backward.

Hokkaijōin (Cosmic Mudra)

Place your right hand, palm-up, on your left foot, and your left hand palm-up on your right palm. The tips of your thumbs should be lightly touching each other. This is called *hokkaijōin* (Cosmic Mudra). Place the tips of your thumbs in front of your navel, and your arms slightly apart from your body.

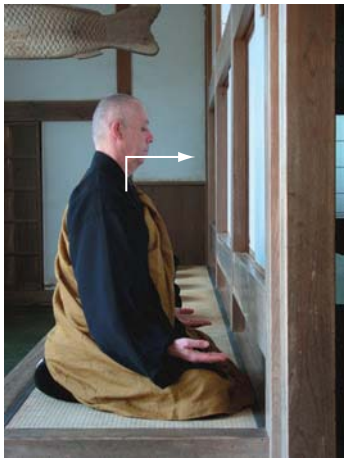
The mouth

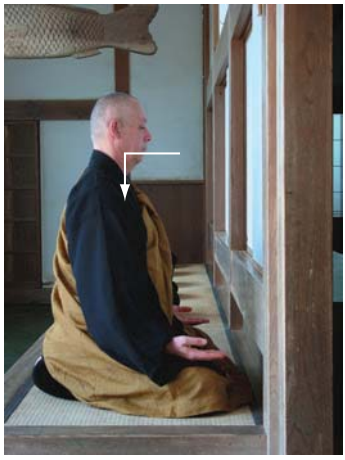
Keep your mouth closed, placing your tongue against the roof of your mouth just behind your teeth.

The eyes

Keep your eyes slightly open. Cast them downward at about a 45-degree angle. Without focusing on any particular thing, let everything have its place in your field of vision. If your eyes are closed, you will easily drift into drowsiness or daydreaming.

Kanki-issoku (exhale completely and take a breath)





Quietly make a deep exhalation and inhalation. Slightly open your mouth and exhale smoothly and slowly. In order to expel all the air from your lungs, exhale from the abdomen. Then close your mouth and continue to breathe through your nose naturally. This is called *kanki-issoku.*

Swaying the body

Place your hands palms-up on your knees and sway the upper half of your body from left to right a few times. Without moving your hips, move the trunk as if it were a pole leaning to one side then the other, so that the waist and hip muscles are stretched. You may also sway forward and backward. At first this movement should be large, gradually becoming smaller and smaller, and ceasing with your body centered in an upright position. Once again forming the *hokkaijōin* with your hands, assume an unmoving upright posture.

Abdominal breathing

During *zazen,* breathe quietly through your nose. Do not try to control your breathing. Let it come and go so naturally that you forget you are breathing. Let long breaths be long, and short breaths be short. Do not make noise by breathing heavily.

Kakusoku (awareness)

Do not concentrate on any particular object or control your thought. When you maintain a proper posture and your breathing settles down, your mind will naturally become tranquil.

When various thought arise in your mind, do not become caught up by them or struggle with them; neither pursue nor try to escape from them. Just leave thoughts alone, allowing them to come up and go away freely. The essential thing in doing *zazen* is to awaken (*kakusoku*) from distraction and dullness, and return to the right posture moment by moment.

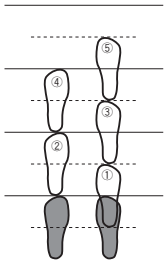
Getting up from *zazen*

When you finish *zazen,* bow in *gasshō,* place your hands palms-up on your thighs, sway your body a few times, first a little, and then more extensively. Take a deep breath. Unfold your legs. Move slowly, especially when your legs are asleep. Do not stand up abruptly.

Kinhin

When doing *kinhin*, walk clockwise around the room, holding your hand

in *shashu* position. From the waist up, your posture should be the same as that in *zazen.* Take the first step with your right foot. Advance by taking only half step for each full breath (one exhalation and inhalation). Walk slowly and smoothly as if you were standing in one place. Do not drag your feet or make noise.



Walk straight ahead, and when turning, always turn to right. The word *kinhin* means to go straight. When you finish *kinhin,* stop and bow. Then walk at a normal pace around the room until you return to your seat.

Sitting in a chair

Sit upright in a chair as you would on a *zafu.* Do not lean backwards. Use a square support cushion on the seat and/or under your feet as needed to find a comfortable upright posture. Hold your hands in your lap in the Cosmic Mudra (*hokkaijōin*).

Other postures (1): *seiza*

This is a variation on the traditional Asian way of sitting. It allows you to form a seated triangle with knees and the base of your spine, but the center of gravity is a bit higher than sitting in full or half-lotus. Sit on a *seiza* bench, a low platform, with your legs folded under the bench, knees firmly on the *zabuton.* You can also support yourself by sitting on a firm *zafu* instead of a bench.

Other postures (2): Burmese position

The Burmese position for sitting crosslegged provides good stability for *zazen* if you are not able to sit in full or half-lotus. In this posture, seat yourself on a *zafu* in the usual way. Cross your legs with the left leg and foot on the floor, tucked against your right inner thigh. The left leg is then folded outside the right, also supported by the floor. The order of crossing the legs may be reversed.

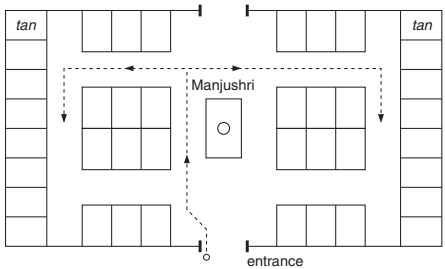
[Notes]

About breathing during *zazen,* Dōgen Zenji said in *Eihei-kōroku* (The collection of Dōgen Zenji's formal speeches and poems), vol. 5:

> In our *zazen,* it is of primary importance to sit in the correct posture. Then, regulate the breathing and calm down. In Hinayana, there are two elementary ways (of beginner's practice): one is to count the breaths, and the other is to contemplate the impurity (of the body). In other words, a practitioner of Hinayana regulates his breathing by counting the breaths. The practice of the buddha-ancestors, however, is completely different from the way of Hinayana. An ancestral teacher has said, "It is better to have the mind of a wily fox than to follow the way of Hinayana self-control." Two of the Hinayna schools (studied) in Japan today are the Shibunritsu (the precept school) and the Kusha (the school based on *Abhidharma-kosa*).
>
> There is also the Mahayana way of regulating breathing. That is, knowing that a long breath is long and that a short one is short. The breath reaches the *tanden* and leaves from there. Although the exhalation and inhalation are different, they both pass through the *tanden.* When you breathe abdominally, it is easy to become aware of the transciency (of life), and to harmonize the mind.
>
> My late teacher Tendō said, "The inhaled breath reaches the *tanden;* however, it is not that this breath comes from somewhere. For that reason, it is neither short nor long. The exhaled breath leaves from the *tanden;* however, it is not possible to say where this breath goes. For that reason, it is neither long nor short." My teacher explained it in that way, and if someone were to ask me how to harmonize one's breathing, I would reply in this way: although it is not Mahayana, it is different from Hinayana; though it is not Hinayana, it is different from Mahayana. And if questioned further regarding what it is ultimately, I would respond that inhaling or exhaling are neither long nor short.

3 | *Manners in the* Zendō

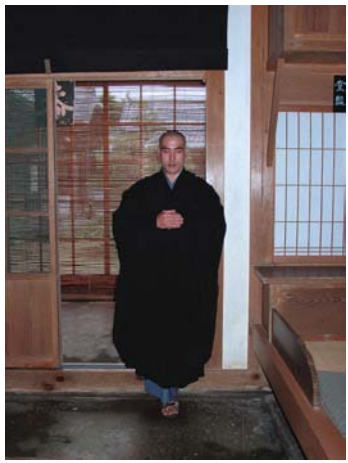
The *zendō* and *sōdō*

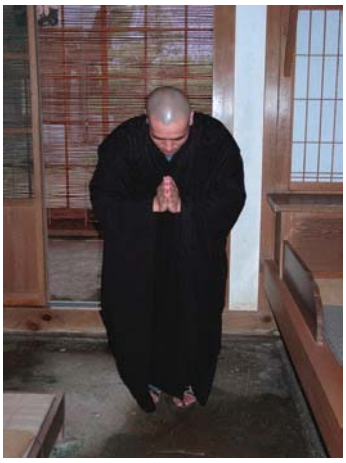


In traditional monasteries there is a building called the *sōdō* (monks' hall) in which practitioners sleep, eat, and practice *zazen* together. In the *sōdō,* there is a platform called a *tan* which is about two feet high. Each person has a space of one tatami (straw mat) on which to eat, sleep, and sit. Manjushri Bodhisattva, the symbol of wisdom, is enshrined in the center of the hall.

The *zendō* is a hall just for sitting practice. In that sense, it differs from the *sōdō,* yet the same manners apply. Manners in the *zendō* may vary in detail, depending upon the monastery or temple. Receive and follow the instructions given at each place. Here, only the basic manners regarding *zazen* are described.

Entering the *zendō*





Hold your hands in *shashu* position and step forward with your left foot at the left side of the entrance. When leaving the *zendō,* step out with your right foot at the same side of the entrance. Only the abbot of the monastery may enter the hall from the middle of the entrance.

After entering the hall, bow in *gasshō* toward the altar and go to your seat. As a sign of respect, you should refrain from walking in front of the statue of Manjushri Bodhisattva. Rather, you should walk around behind the image. When walking, keep your hands in the *shashu* position.

Arriving at your seat

When you arrive at your seat, face the seat and bow in *gasshō.* This is a

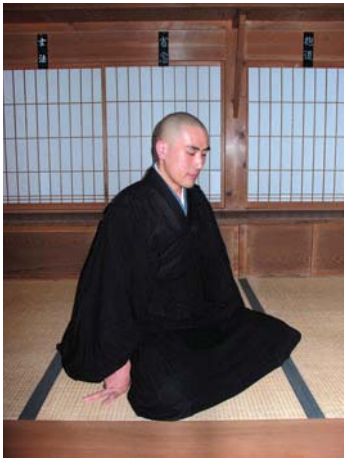
greeting to the people who are about to do *zazen* with you at the seats on either side of you. The people sitting next to you also bow. This is called *rin'i-monjin.* Then, turn around to the right until your seat is behind you, and bow again to those sitting at the opposite side of the hall. This is a greeting to the people across the hall and is referred to as *taiza-monjin.*

Sit down on your *zafu,* turn around to the right, and sit facing the wall. In the *sōdō,* there is a wooden mealboard (*jōen*) at the edge of the platform (*tan*) on which bowls are set during meals. Do not place your buttocks or feet on the *jōen*.

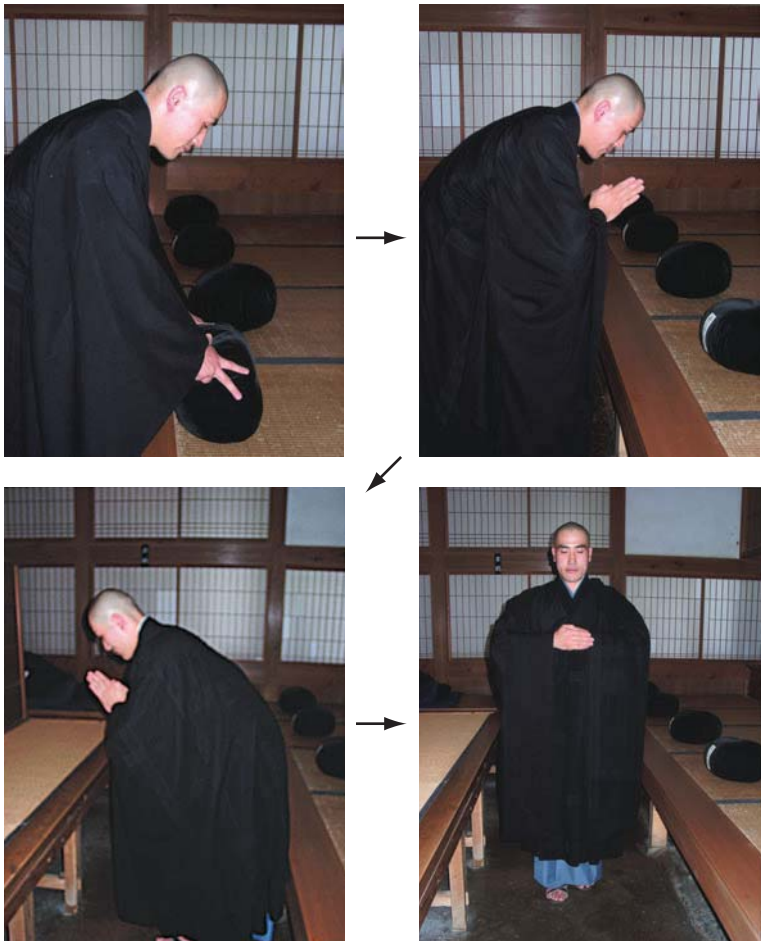
The bell

The bell is rung to signal the beginning and end of *zazen.* When *zazen* begins, the bell is rung three times (*shijōshō*). When *kinhin* begins, the bell is rung twice (*kinhinshō*). And when *kinhin* is finished, the bell is rung once (*chukaishō*). Also, when *zazen* is finished, the bell is rung once (*hōzenshō*).

Finishing *zazen*



When the bell is rung twice to signal *kinhin* or once to signal the end of *zazen* relax your body as explained above, and get down from the *tan.* Face the seat and adjust the shape of your *zafu.* Then, bow toward your seat. Next, turning around to the right, bow to the people on the opposite side as you did before sitting.



If there is no *kinhin,* leave your seat and walk to the entrance of the hall with your hands in the *shashu* position. Bow in *gasshō* toward Manjushri Bodhisattva and leave the hall. Step out with your right foot this time. When you do *kinhin,* start to do it right away. Keep an equal distance between you and the people behind and in front of you. At the end of *kinhin* the bell is rung once. Stop and bow in *shashu.* Then walk

at a normal pace following the person in front of you. Walk around the hall until you return to your seat. At this point you may go to the toilet if you wish. The next period of *zazen* will begin shortly.

The *kyōsaku*

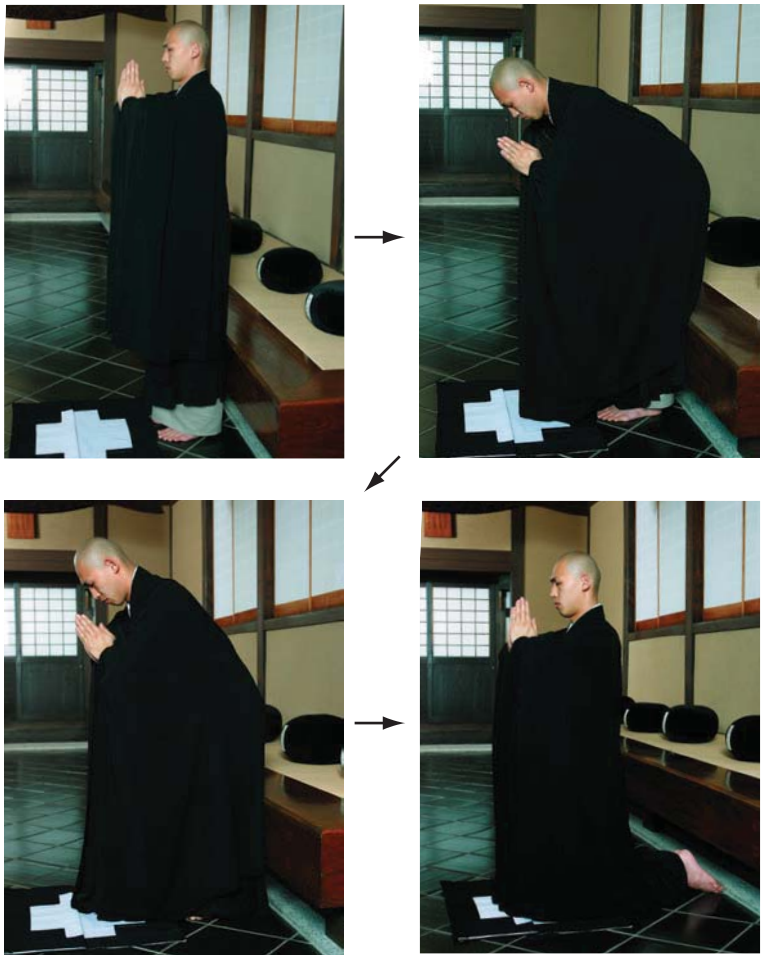
The *kyōsaku* is a wooden stick with which the *jikidō* (in a sense the human representative of Manjushri Bodhisattva), wakes people when they fall asleep or when their minds are busy. If you want to be struck by the *kyōsaku,* signal with *gasshō* and wait. When the *jikidō* sets the stick on your right shoulder, lower your head to the left. This is to avoid being hit on the ear and to make it easier to hit the shoulder muscles. Continue to *gasshō*. After the *jikidō* hits your shoulder, straighten your head again and bow. The *jikidō* also bows to you as he or she stands behind you, holding the stick with both hands.

Position of the hands

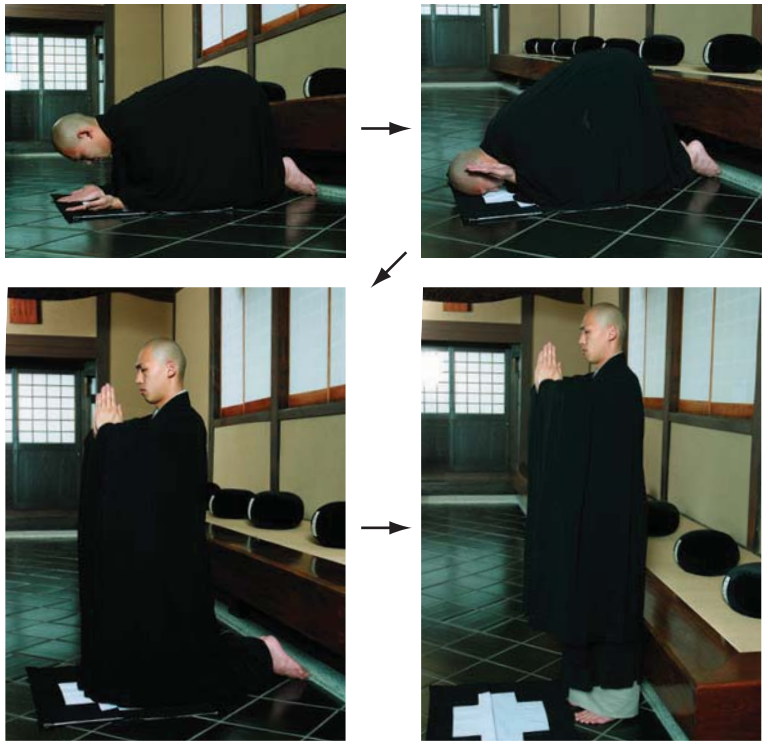
Gasshō: Hold the palms and fingers of both hands together. Your arms should be slightly away from your chest, your elbows should extend outward from your sides in a straight line parallel with the floor. The tips of your fingers should be approximately the same level as your nose. *Gasshō* is an expression of respect, faith and devotion. Because the two hands (duality) are joined together, it expresses "One Mind."

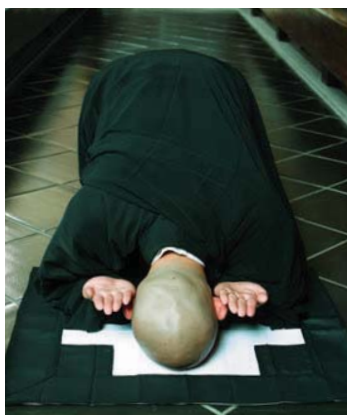
Shashu: Put the thumb of your left hand in the middle of the palm and make a fist around it. Place the fist in front of your chest. Cover the fist with your right hand. Keep your elbows away from your body forming a straight line with both forearms.

Prostrating (*gotai-tōchi*)



Stand upright and bow slightly in *gasshō* from the waist. Then, bend your knees until they touch the floor. Bend forward from the waist, touching the floor with your hands (palms up), forearms, and forehead.





Keeping your palms level, raise them as high as your ears. Maintain this posture for a moment. Bringing your hands back into *gasshō,* straighten up to a standing position and bow as before. Prostrating in this way three times is called *sanpai.* We do *sanpai,* for example, before and after chanting sutras. *Gotai* (five parts of the body) refers to both knees, both elbows and forehead, while *tōchi* means casting them to the ground.

Part II

An Introduction to Sōtō Zen

1 | *History and Teachings of Sōtō Zen*

A Brief History of Sōtō Zen

2,500 years ago in India, Shakyamuni Buddha realized the path of practice we now know as Buddhism. After the Buddha's death, the *sangha* or community of practitioners developed. Because of the great King Asoka's devotion to the dharma, the Buddha's teachings spread throughout India during his reign. He sent Buddhist monks beyond his kingdom to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, and Greece. This was Buddhism's first journey across borders.

Buddhism was practiced by merchants in India, and Buddhist monks traveled along the merchant's Silk Road in Central Asia. The teachings reached China around the first century CE. Chinese people already had their own well-developed spiritual culture, so Buddhism based on Indian culture had to be transformed, incorporating Chinese influences from Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese folk religious culture. Chinese Buddhism emerged in forms quite different from Indian Buddhism. Many Chinese schools were based on particular *sutras.* The Nehan (Niepan) School was based on the *Pari-Nirvana Sutra;* the Sanron (Sanlun) School studied Madhyamika teachings; the Hossō (Faxiang) School studied Yogacara teachings; Kegon (Huayan) was based on the *Flower Ornament Sutra;* the Tendai (Tientai) School was based on the *Lotus Sutra.* It is said that Chan (Zen) Buddhism came from the meeting of Indian Buddhism and Taoism. Chan Buddhists claimed not to rely on any particular sutras, but on the direct transmission of buddha mind from the First Zen Ancestor Bodhidharma.

According to Chan tradition, Bodhidharma came to China from India in the sixth century (527). At the time of the Fourth Ancestor Dōshin (Daoxin, 580–651) and the Fifth Ancestor Kōnin (Hongren, 602–675), hundreds of practitioners started to live together in communities.

After the Fifth Ancestor, the Northern School of Jinshū (Shenxiu, 605–706) and the Southern School of Enō (Huineng, 638–713) were

divided. In time only the Sixth Ancestor Enō's lineage continued, establishing Chan as one of the main streams of Chinese Buddhism. Enō had many disciples. Among them, Seigen Gyōshi (Qingyuan Xingsi, ?–740) and Nangaku Ejō (Nanyue Huairang, 677–744) were important. From the streams of these two masters flowed five Chan schools by the end of Tang dynasty in 10th century. From the lineage of Nangaku Ejō, came the Igyō (Guiyang) School and Rinzai (Linji) School; from the lineage of Seigen Gyōshi, came the Sōtō (Caodong) School, Unmon (Yunmen) School, and Hōgen (Fayan) School. The founder of the Chinese Sōtō School was Tōzan Ryōkai (Dongshan Liangjie, 807–869).

One of the unique characteristics of Chan or Zen Buddhism was that the schools created their own monastic regulations called *Shingi* (*Quinggui*). Hyakujō Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai, 749–814) has traditionally been considered the first Zen master to established clear monastic regulations, *Hyakujō Shingi* (Baizhang Quinggui). Hyakujō was famous for his saying "A day of no working is a day of no eating." Farming was prohibited for monks in the Indian Vinaya precepts, but Chan practitioners began working to support their practice. Since then, *samu* (work) has been considered an essential aspect of Zen monastic practice. Through meetings with head cooks or *tenzos* in China, this spirit influenced Dōgen Zenji's teachings.

In the Song Dynasty China (960–1278), a Zen Buddhism establishment was supported by the emperor, high officials, and the common people. At last the Chan or Zen School evolved into two main streams: Rinzai's *koan* Zen and Sōtō's silent illumination.

Dōgen Zenji and Japanese Sōtō Zen

Chinese Buddhism came to Japan by way of Korea in the middle of the sixth century. Buddhism and Buddhist culture quickly set deep roots in the soil of Japanese spirituality. Japanese Buddhism had a history of 650 years before Dōgen Zenji. In the Nara period (710–794), Buddhist schools such as Kegon-shū, Hossō-shū, Sanron-shū, Kusha-shū, Ritsu-shū, Jōjitsu-shū flourished. In the Heian period (794–1192), the Tendai School (established by Saichō) and the Shingon School (established by Kūkai) became dominant. Zen Buddhism was the last Buddhist school

transmitted from China, first by the Rinzai master, Eisai (1141–1215). So at the time Dōgen Zenji was born, Zen was still quite new to Japan.

Eihei Dōgen (1200–1253)

Dōgen's family name was Minamoto. Early scholars believed his father was Minamoto Michichika and his mother was a daughter of Fujiwara (Kujō) Motofusa. However some modern Sōtō scholars think Dōgen's father was Minamoto Michitomo, Michichika's son. According to Dōgen's biographies, his mother died when he was seven years old. In keeping with his mother's wish, he aspired to be a Buddhist monk. Legend has it that he studied *Kusharon* (*Abhidharmakosa*) when he was nine years old. He was ordained as a Tendai monk at Enryakuji monastery on Mt. Hiei by the Abbot Kōen in 1213.

While living on Mt. Hiei, Dōgen had this question, "If the *tathagatas* are themselves already dharma-body and dharma-nature, why do all buddhas arouse bodhi-mind and practice the way of awakening?" He visited various teachers seeking an answer, but without satisfaction. At 17, he left the Tendai monastery and started practicing Zen at Kenninji in Kyoto, which was founded by Eisai (1141–1215), the Japanese priest who brought Rinzai Zen to Japan from China. He continued to practice with Eisai's disciple, Myōzen (1185–1225) for several years.

In 1223, Dōgen went to China with Myōzen, who died there in 1225. Dōgen practiced at Tendō-san Keitokuji (Tientong-shan Jingde-si) with Rinzai Zen master Musai Ryōha (Wuji Liaopai, 1149–1224). After Musai's death he traveled and visited other Zen monasteries and teachers. In 1224 or 1225 Dōgen met with the new abbot of Tendō-san Keitokuji, Tendō Nyojō (Tiangtong Rujing, 1162–1227). Nyojō was the teacher he had been looking for. He practiced with Nyojō for several years, received dharma transmission from him and returned to Japan in 1227.

Back in Japan, Dōgen settled at Kenninji. In 1230 he moved to An'yō-in in Fukakusa, south of Kyoto, and lived by himself. In 1231 Dōgen wrote *Bendōwa* in order to share the style of *zazen* he saw in China.

Dōgen founded the monastery Kōshōji in 1233 in Fukakusa. He wrote *Maha-prajna-paramita* (*Makahanya-haramitsu*) and *Manifestation*

of Reality (*Genjō-koan*) the same year. These are the earliest chapters of his central work, *Shōbōgenzō.* At Kōshōji, he also wrote *Instruction for the Cook* (*Tenzo-kyōkun*), *Points to Watch in Practicing the Way* (*Gakudō-yōjinshu*), *Manual for Priest Ordination* (*Shukke-ryakusahō*) and others aimed at transmitting the spirit of Zen and the practice of Zen community. At Kōshōji he built the first formal monks' hall (*sōdō*) in Japan.

Many disciples joined Dōgen's *sangha.* Ejō recorded Dōgen's informal talks to monks at Kōshōji between 1234 to 1235 and assembled them as *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki.*

In 1243, Dōgen and his *sangha* moved to Echizen province and lived at Yoshiminedera. In 1244, the construction of Daibutsuji was completed. Even in this time of transition, Dōgen continued to write chapters of *Shōbōgenzō* one after another. He wrote 33 chapters in the year and a half when he was without a monastery. But in 1245 they held a first summer practice period at the newly built Daibutsuji. Dōgen's priorities shifted from writing *Shōbōgenzō* to teaching and presenting formal discourses in the dharma hall (*jōdō*). *The Extensive Record of Eihei Dōgen Zenji* (*Eihei-kōroku*) documents those discourses. In 1246, Dōgen changed the temple's name from Daibutsuji to Eiheiji. *Pure Standards for the Temple Administrators* (*Chiji Shingi*) was publicized on the same day.

Dōgen became ill in 1252, and went to Kyoto to have treatments in the summer of 1253. He died in Kyoto on the 28th day of the eighth month of 1253.

Dōgen's dharma successors

Koun Ejō (1198–1280) was the most important of Dōgen's disciples. Ejō was born in Kyoto in the Fujiwara family. He received bodhisattva precepts and became a Tendai monk when he was 18 years old. Ejō studied the teachings of Tendai and other schools. He began to practice Zen with Bucchi Kakuan (?–?) at Tōnomine in Nara. In 1227, when Dōgen came back from China, Ejō visited Dōgen at Kenninji. In 1234, he joined Dōgen's *sangha* at Kōshōji. In 1235 Ejō received the precepts from Dōgen, and the following year served as the first *shuso* or head monk at Kōshōji. Ejō practiced as Dōgen's *jisha* or attendant until Dōgen's death, and he was soon appointed the second abbot of Eiheiji.

In 1267, Ejō retired from the abbacy and named Tettsū Gikai his successor. Five years later, because of conflicts within the assembly, Gikai was forced to resign from the abbacy and Ejō became abbot again. He died when he was 82 years old in 1280.

According to Dōgen's biography, he had two dharma successors beside Ejō. **Sōkai (1216?–1242)** was *shuso* after Ejō, but he died when he was only 26 years old in 1242. Dōgen gave two *jōdō* (formal dharma discourse) when Sōkai died. These *jōdō* are included in the first volume of *Eihei-kōroku* (*jōdō* No. 111 and 112 in Monkaku version).

Another dharma heir of Dōgen was **Sen'ne (?–?).** He was also Dōgen's *jisha,* and compiled three volumes of the *Eihei-kōroku* (*Extensive Record of Eihei Dōgen*). After Dōgen's death, Sen'ne went back to Kyoto and established Yōkōji at the site of Dōgen's cremation. At Yōkōji, Sen'ne wrote the first commentary to *Shōbōgenzō, Shōbōgenzō-kikigaki.* Sen'ne's disciple Kyōgō (?–?) added his own comments to Sen'ne's *Kikigaki* and wrote one volume called *Goshō,* which is also known as *Eishitsu-sho,* or *Okikigaki-sho.* Yōkōji disappeared soon after the time of Kyōgō. This manuscript was moved to Ōita, Kyushu and stored in the founder's hall at Senpukuji. For several hundred years it was neglected. But in the Tokugawa era it was revived by eminent Sōtō scholars, like Menzan, and was a source for their understanding of *Shōbōgenzō. Goshō* is considered the clearest expression of a traditional understanding of *Shōbōgenzō.*

Other disciples of Dōgen

Several other disciples of Dōgen helped make his teachings available to Japanese people of later generation. They include some of the authors whose writings appear in this book.

Hōkyō Jakuen (1207–1299) was born in China. He practiced with Dōgen at Tiangtong monastery within Nyojō's assembly. Jakuen came to Japan in 1228 to practice with Dōgen. At Eiheiji, Jakuen was in charge of Nyojō's Memorial Hall, Jōyō-an. After Dōgen's death, Jakuen received dharma transmission from Ejō, and later founded Hōkyōji, near Eiheiji in Ōno, Fukui Prefecture.

Jakuen left no writing at all, not even a single poem. Jakuen's disciple Giun (1253–1333) became the fifth abbot of Eiheiji after the fourth

abbot Gien died in 1314. After Giun, Jakuen's lineage occupied the abbacy of Eiheiji until the 37th abbot, Sekigyū Tenryō (1638–1714).

Tettsū Gikai (1219–1309) was born in Echizen (Fukui Prefecture). When he was 13 years old, Gikai was ordained by the Nihon Daruma-shū priest, Ekan at Hajakuji. Gikai went to Mt. Hiei and received the bodhisattva precepts. In 1241, together with his master Ekan, Gikai became Dōgen's student. After Dōgen's death, Gikai received dharma transmission from Ejō.

In 1259, he went to China where he visited various Chinese monasteries in order to study the layout and design of temple buildings. After four years in China, Gikai returned to Eiheiji and helped develop the monastery and its regulations.

In 1267, Gikai succeeded Ejō's and served as the third abbot of Eiheiji for six years. In 1273, he resigned and lived with his mother at a small hermitage near Eiheiji. In 1280, when Ejō passed away, Gikai became abbot again. Gikai resigned his position and moved to Daijōji in Kanazawa in 1293. In 1298 he retired from Daijōji, and died in 1309. Keizan Jōkin was his main disciple.

Kangan Giin (1217–1300) went to China in 1264 when he was 47, and stayed there for four years. Giin took the record of Dōgen's formal discourses, *Eihei-kōroku* (Extensive Record of Eihei Dōgen), to China. Giin presented the record to Chinese master Mugai Gion (Wuwai Yiyuan (?–?), Tendō Nyojō's disciple and Dōgen's elder dharma brother, and asked him to make a selection. Mugai Gion selected about 10 percent of the entire *Eihei-kōroku* including *jōdō*, *shōsan* (informal meeting), *hōgo* (Dharma Words) and verses. The selection was titled *Eihei Gen Zenji Goroku* (Recorded Sayings of Eihei Dōgen Zenji), published in 1358 by the sixth abbot of Eiheiji, Donki (1297?–1350?), Giun's dharma successor. This was one of the Sōtō School's first publications.

Giin came back to Japan in 1267 and settled down in Kyushu's Kumamoto prefecture, where he established Daijiji and other temples. His dharma descendants set up temples in Shizuoka Prefecture which were important to the development of Sōtō Zen tradition in later times.

Later development of Sōtō Zen

In the history of Sōtō Zen, Keizan Jōkin bears honorific Taiso or Great Ancestor. Along with Dōgen Zenji, who is called Kōso or High Ancestor, Keizan is considered to be one of Sōtō Zen's Two Founders (*ryōso*). Eiheiji and Sōjiji, which was founded by Keizan, are called the Ryōhonzan (Two Main Monasteries).

Keizan Jokin (1264 or 1268–1325) was born in Echizen (Fukui Prefecture). In 1271, when he was very young, Jōkin visited Tettsū Gikai at Eiheiji. He was ordained by Koun Ejō, at Eiheiji in 1275 at the age of 12. After Ejō's death in 1280, Jokin practiced with Gikai.

Jōkin's teacher, Gikai left Eiheiji and moved to Daijōji in 1293. When Jōkin was 31 years old in 1295, he received dharma transmission from Tettsū Gikai and served as *shuso* at Daijōji. In 1298, Jōkin succeeded Gikai as Abbot of Daijōji. In 1300 Jōkin started to lecture on dharma transmission stories from Shakyamuni to Koun Ejō. These lectures were compiled as *Denkō-roku* (Transmission of Light).

Jōkin stayed at Daijōji until 1311. In that year he gave Daijōji to Meihō Sotetsu (1277–1350) and moved to Yōkōji in Noto (Ishikawa Prefecture).

In 1323 at Yōkōji, Jōkin erected a memorial hall called Dentō-in (temple of dharma-lamp transmission) and built a mound called Gorō-hō (Summit of Five Elders) memorializing the five generation teachers from Nyojō to Jōkin himself (Nyojō, Dōgen, Ejō, Gikai, and Jōkin).

In 1321, the temple grounds of Sōjiji, in what is now Yokohama, were donated to Jōkin. Jōkin developed Sōjiji together with Yōkōji. In 1324 Jōkin established Sōjiji as a monastery and had a *sōdō* (monks' hall) opening ceremony. Gasan Jōseki was the *shuso.* Jōkin entrusted Sōjiji to Gasan Jōseki right after the ceremony, and moved back to Yōkōji. In 1325, Jōkin entrusted Yōkōji to Meihō Sotetsu and died on 15th day of the eight month of the same year. Jōkin was 62 years old.

Beside *The Record of Transmission of Light* (*Denkō-roku*), he wrote *Zazen Yōjinki* (*Things to Watch in* Zazen *Practice*), *Sankon Zazen-setsu* (*Explanation of* Zazen *for the Three Kinds of People*), and *Shinjinmei-nentei* (*Commentary on the Poem by the Third Ancestor in China, Xinxinming*). His regulations at Yōkōji were compiled later by his

descendants and entitled *Keizan Shingi.*

Keizan's disciples and their successors' energetic activities helped the proliferation of Sōtō Zen. By the 17th century many temples had been established all across Japan. But Dōgen Zenji's teachings were not widely studied. Copies of *Shōbōgenzō* were copied by hands and stored in certain temples. Sōtō monks' practice was much the same as that of their Rinzai counterparts. Until recently this period was thought of as a dark age. These days, however, scholars consider the records of *koan* practice, rituals and ceremonies such as *shōmotsu* or *kirigami* as central to the study of spiritual culture in medieval Japan.

Following Keizan, another important figure was Gida Daichi (1290–1366). Daichi was born in Higo (Kumamoto Prefecture). He was ordained as a Sōtō monk by Kangan Giin, Dōgen Zenji's disciple and the founder of Daijiji. He practiced with Keizan Jōkin at Daijōji for seven years. In 1314, Daichi went to China and practiced there for 11 years. After coming back to Japan, Daichi received Dharma transmission from Meihō Sotetsu, one of the dharma heirs of Keizan. Daichi founded Gidaji in Kaga (Ishikawa Prefecture). Later he went back to his homeland, Kumamoto and stayed at Shōgoji for 20 years, supported by the local lord, Kikuchi family. *Jūniji-hōgo* was written for a member of the Kikuchi family, Kikuchi Takeshige. Daichi was also famous for his Chinese poetry.

Tokugawa period (1603–1868)

After the Tokugawa Shogunate was established in the 17th Century, scholar monks supported by the government appeared not only in the Sōtō School but among all the Buddhist sects. In Sōtō tradition, many eminent scholar monks established Sōtō-shū study: Gesshū Sōko (?–1618), Manzan Dōhaku (1636–1715), Tokuō Ryōkō (1649–1709), Tenkei Denson (1648–1735), Menzan Zuihō (1683–1769), Banjin Dōtan (1698–1775), and more. They studied Dōgen Zenji's writings and clarified that Dōgen Zenji's teachings are uniquely different from Ōbaku School—transmitted by the Chinese Zen master Ingen Ryūki (Yinyuan Longqi, 1592–1673) from China in 17th century–and the *koan* practice of Japanese Rinzai Zen. The system of Sōtō-shū study

established by those Tokugawa scholar monks became the foundation of Sōtō-shū doctrine which continues even today.

One of those eminent scholar monks, Menzan Zuihō was born in Higo (Kumamoto), and was ordained by Ryōun. When he was 21 years old, Zuihō went to Edo (Tokyo) and studied with Manzan Dōhaku, Sonnō Shūeki and Tokuō Ryōkō. In 1705, he received Dharma transmission from Sonnō Shūeki (1649–1705). He spent his days at several temples continuing to study Dōgen Zenji's writings, and he himself wrote more than 50 books, including his commentary on *Shōbōgenzō, Shōbōgenzō-monge.*

Sōtō Zen in modern times

With more than 14,000 temples, the Sōtō School is the largest Buddhist school in Japan. Dōgen Zenji's teachings are studied by priests and lay people alike. Numerous volumes by and about Dōgen, including several translations of *Shōbōgenzō,* have been published in Japanese. In the year 2000 we celebrated the 800th anniversary of Dōgen's birth, and in 2002 we are observing the 750th anniversary of his death. Each year thousands of people visit Eiheiji to express their respect and gratitude for Dōgen's teachings.

In the 19th century after the Meiji Restoration, Japanese scholars, including Nanjō Bunyū and Takakusu Junjirō, went to Europe to study Buddhist texts in Pali and Sanscrit. Kawaguchi Ekai, Tada Tōkan and Aoki Bunkyō went to Tibet to work on texts in Tibetan. For Japanese practitioners and scholars this is a new encounter with Buddhism, which had previously been studied only in translations from Chinese.

In 1893, the representatives of various Japanese Buddhist schools attended the Parliament of the World Religion held in Chicago. Rinzai Zen master Shaku Sōen was one of them. Later Shaku Sōen sent Daisetsu Suzuki to the United States. Because of D.T. Suzuki's extensive writing and lecturing in America and Europe, the philosophy of Rinzai Zen drew the attention of intellectuals in the West.

Since the late 19th century, Japanese people emigrated and formed communities in Hawaii, California, and Brazil. Sōtō Zen priests followed them and built temples for the Japanese communities. Until the 1960s

few westerners were interested in the actual practice of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. But in the 60s, Japanese Sōtō priests, including Suzuki Shunryū, Maezumi Hakuyū, Katagiri Dainin, and Deshimaru Taisen, began to teach Zen meditation in America and Europe. Europeans and Americans gathered together to practice with them, and established many Zen centers. Over the last 100 years, Sōtō Zen has been studied and practiced at many temples and centers outside Japan, and the number of the Zen centers is still increasing. The Sōtō School has administrative offices in Hawaii, North America, South America, and Europe. Dōgen Zenji's and Keizan Zenji's writings have been translated into English and other languages and giving inspiration to authentic practice.

We sincerely hope the teachings of Dōgen Zenji and Keizan Zenji, and the practice of *zazen* can contribute to the development of spiritual culture in our time. The welfare of humanity calls out for the practice of peace.

Essential Teachings of Sōtō Zen

In the *Sutta-Nipata,* among the earliest Buddhist scriptures, Shakyamuni Buddha says, "One who possesses the strength of wisdom, born of the moral precepts and restraints, who is tranquil in mind and delights in meditation, who is mindful, free from attachment, free from fallowness of mind and intoxicants, is called a sage by the wise." (translated by H. Saddhatissa, Curzon Press, 1985)

The Buddha is speaking about the three key elements of practice-wisdom (*prajna*), precepts (*sila*), and meditation (*samadhi*). All traditions of Buddhism include these three principles of practice. Sōtō Zen Buddhists follow Dōgen's teachings on these three points.

Precepts (Sila)—guidelines for our basic attitude towards life

Since Buddhism is not a folk religion, one is not a Buddhist by birth. To become a Buddhist we take vows, receiving Buddha's precepts as guidelines for our lives. In *Shōbōgenzō Jukai* (*Receiving Precepts*), Dōgen said, "In India and China, where [the buddha-dharma] has been

transmitted by buddhas and ancestors, in order to enter the dharma we must receive the precepts. Unless we receive precepts we cannot be a disciple of buddhas or a descendant of ancestors. Avoiding misdeeds and misconduct is itself studying Zen and inquiring into dharma. The true treasure of the dharma eye is identical with the primary importance of precepts."

From the time of Early Buddhism in India, all Buddhists received the precepts. To be a Buddhist monk, one received the Vinaya precepts or rules—250 precepts for male monks and 348 precepts for female monks. Lay Buddhists received five, eight, or ten precepts. Mahayana Buddhist monks in India also received Vinaya precepts. This monastic tradition of Vinaya precepts still continues in the Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, and Korea.

In China, precepts sutras such as *Bonmokyō* (*The Sutra of the Brahma Net*) formulated bodhisattva precepts for Mahayana schools. According to *Zennen Shingi* (*Chanyuan Quinggui*), Chinese Zen monks received both Vinaya and bodhisattva precepts.

In Japan, although there is a small Vinaya sect, most Buddhist schools stopped transmitting Vinaya precepts more than 1000 years ago. In the ninth century, Saichō, the founder of the Japanese Tendai School, insisted that Hinayana precepts were inappropriate for a Mahayana country like Japan. So when he was ordained in the Tendai tradition, Dōgen Zenji received only bodhisattva precepts. Dōgen had some difficulty at Chinese monasteries because he had not received Vinaya ordination, but when he returned to Japan—as described in *Shōbōgenzō Jukai* (*Receiving Precepts*)—he gave his students only the bodhisattva precepts. In Sōtō Zen tradition both priests and lay people receive 16 bodhisattva precepts. These consist of Three Refuges, Threefold Pure Precepts, and Ten Major Precepts. The meaning of these is conveyed by Dōgen Zenji's comments in *Kyōjukaimon* (*Comments on Teaching and Conferring the Precepts*); *Bonmokyō-ryakusho,* a commentary by Kyōgō; and *Zenkaishō* written by Banjin Dōtan in the 17th century.

Repentance

At the precepts ceremony, first we chant the verse of repentance.

All my past and harmful karma,
born from beginningless greed, hate, and delusion,
through body, speech, and mind,
I now fully avow.

In the *Kyōjukaimon,* Dōgen Zenji said, "In the testimony of buddhas and ancestors, you have already been cleansed of your karma of body, speech and thought, and have become immaculate. This is the power of repentance."

Three Refuges

We take refuge in the Three Treasures, chanting the Three Refuge Verse.

I take refuge in buddha;
I take refuge in dharma;
I take refuge in *sangha.*
I take refuge in buddha, honored as the highest;
I take refuge in dharma, honored as the stainless;
I take refuge in sangha, honored as harmonious.
I have completely taken refuge in buddha;
I have completely taken refuge in dharma;
I have completely taken refuge in *sangha.*

In the *Kyōjukaimon,* Dōgen Zenji said, "When you take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, you become qualified to acquire the great precepts of all buddhas."

Threefold Pure Precepts

The Threefold Pure Precepts and Dōgen Zenji's comments are as follows.

(1) The precept of embracing all moral codes: This is the abode of the laws and codes of all buddhas. This is the basis of the laws and codes of all buddhas.
(2) The precept of embracing all good acts: This is the dharma of the ultimate awakening. This is the way in which one should practice

by oneself and the way in which one should lead others.

(3) The precept of embracing and benefiting all living beings: One should transcend distinction between ordinary beings and sages, and save both oneself and others.

The origin of the Threefold Pure Precepts is in *Bosatsu Yōrakukyo* (*The Sutra of the Necklace of Bodhisattva*). It is said that the Threefold Pure Precepts were created to encompass all the Vinaya precepts. In *Shōbōgenzō Shoaku-makusa* (*Avoiding All Evil Acts*), comments on the Precepts of the Seven Buddhas, a verse appearing in the *Dhammapada,* Dōgen wrote:

> Studying the supreme awakening by listening to teachings, practicing and verifying the fruit, we find it is profound, distant and wondrous. We hear about ultimate awakening through teaching or through scriptures. In the beginning, we hear the saying that we should avoid all evil acts. If we don't hear that we should avoid all evil acts, we are not hearing the true dharma of all buddhas, but the teaching of demons.

The Ten Major Precepts

Then we receive the ten major precepts. Here the precepts are accompanied by Dōgen Zenji's comments from *Kyōjukaimon*.

1. Not killing:
   By not killing life, buddha seeds are nurtured and one can attain the Buddha's wisdom. Do not kill life.
2. Not stealing:
   When mind and objects are such, the gate of liberation stands open.
3. Not indulging in sexual greed:
   When the three wheels of body, speech and mind are pure, there is nothing to be desired. All Buddhas are walking the same path.
4. Not speaking falsehood:
   Since the dharma-wheel turns from the very beginning, there is neither too much nor too little. When a drop of sweet dew

moistens all beings, reality and truth are revealed.

5. Not selling intoxicating liquor:
   Do not bring intoxicants in. Do not let them come in. This is truly the great light of wisdom.
6. Not talking of the faults of others:
   Within the buddha-dharma, we go together, share dharma together, realize the same enlightenment, and practice together. Do not discuss the faults of others. Do not corrupt the way.
7. Not praising oneself nor slandering others:
   Buddhas and ancestors attain realization with the whole sky and the great earth. When they manifest the great body, there is no inside and outside in the sky. When they manifest the dharma body, there is not an inch of ground on the earth.
8. Not begrudging the dharma or materials:
   Just one phrase or one verse of dharma is nothing but the myriad phenomenal beings and the hundred grasses. One dharma and one realization are all buddhas and ancestors. One should give them freely when requested. Never begrudge them.
9. Not being angry:
   Withdrawing without attachment, setting forth without attachment, being real without attachment, being void without attachment: right there you can see an ocean of bright clouds and an ocean of magnificent clouds.
10. Not slandering the Three Treasures:
    The Buddha manifests his body in the world and preaches dharma. The Three Treasures are the crossroads of the world. The Three Treasures return to the ocean of all-knowing wisdom and are immeasurable. We should respectfully accept the Three Treasures and devote ourselves to them.

We receive the 16 bodhisattva precepts during lay or priest ordination as Sōtō Zen Buddhists. Our *zazen* practice is based on the ethical teachings of the precepts. Sometimes people believe that since Zen transcends good and bad, no ethics are necessary. Our sense of ethics or morality is based on discrimination between good and bad. These precepts are also about what is good and we should do, and what is bad

and we should avoid. But the fundamental understanding of bodhisattva precepts is that they arise naturally when one awakens to the reality of interdependent origination.

Banjin Dōtan's *Zenkaishō* said:

> Precept is restraint and treatment [to heal the sickness caused by the three poisons of greed, hatred, and delusion]. Shakyamuni Buddha, having completed supreme awakening while sitting under the bodhi-tree, established the precepts. This is called restraint. The Buddha expressed restraint by saying, "I and the great earth and all sentient beings have simultaneously attained the Way." Therefore, these are called the buddha precepts. These precepts are the original source of all buddhas and the root of practicing the bodhisattva way. The foundation is that all sangha members are Buddha's children.

The Vinaya precepts are a collection of Shakyamuni Buddha's admonitions to the monks. When a monk made a mistake, the Buddha said not do such a thing any more. Each rule became a Vinaya precept. But, the idea of the bodhisattva precepts is that they arise naturally when buddhas awaken to the reality of all beings. So these 16 precepts are not simply ethical teachings but an expression of the reality of the interdependent origination which the Buddha realized. According to Dōgen Zenji's *Bendōwa,* we sit the same *zazen* the Buddha did under the bodhi tree. "Thankfully, [doing *zazen*] is already sitting peacefully in the *jijuyū-zanmai* of the buddhas." (translation by Shohaku Okumura and Taigen Dan Leighton, *The Wholehearted Way,* p.25) We let go of all the discriminating thoughts arising from our karmic consciousness.

In our daily lives, we need to make choices about what should be done and what should be avoided. Our standard for such decisions is the bodhisattva precepts, based on reality before any act of discrimination.

Pure standards (*shingi*)—guidelines for our daily activities

In Zen monasteries we also have a set of guidelines called *Shingi* (Ch. *Qinggui,* Pure Standards). *Shingi* are regulations for monastic practice

established in Chinese Zen monasteries. Dōgen introduced *Shingi* to Japan. His regulations and commentaries were compiled as *Eihei Shingi.* These were written for disciples at Eiheiji monastery, but Dōgen's teachings on actual day-to-day activities also show us how to live as a bodhisattva and a *zazen* practitioner in the modern age.

In *Instructions for the Cook* (*Tenzo-kyōkun*), Dōgen described his own experience with a *tenzo* or head cook he met while still in port after arriving in China. The old monk was *tenzo* at Ayuwang monastery. He visited Dōgen's boat to buy Japanese mushrooms for a special dish the next day. Young Dōgen invited him on board for tea and conversation.

> Dōgen asked, "What time did you leave Ayuwang?"
> The *tenzo* said, "After lunch."
> Dōgen said, "How far is Ayuwang from here?"
> The *tenzo* said, "34 or 35 *li* [about 12 miles]."
>
> Dōgen wished to continue the discussion and invited him to dinner. But the *tenzo* replied, "It is not possible. If I do not take care of tomorrow's offering it will be done badly."
>
> Dōgen said, "In your temple aren't there monks who know how to prepare meals the same as you? If only one person, the *tenzo,* is absent, will something be deficient?"
>
> The *tenzo* said, "In my old age I am doing this job as wholehearted practice. How could I possibly give away [my responsibility]? And when I came here, I did not ask permission to stay away overnight."
>
> Dōgen then asked the *tenzo,* "Venerable *tenzo,* in your advanced years why do you not wholeheartedly engage the way in *zazen,* or penetrate the words and stories of ancient masters, instead of troubling yourself with being tenzo and working? What is that good for?"
>
> Then the *tenzo* laughed loudly and said, "Oh, good fellow from a foreign country, you have not yet understood wholeheartedly engaging in the way, and you do not know what words and phrases are."
>
> Upon hearing this Dōgen felt stunned and ashamed. He asked, "What are words and phrases? What is wholeheartedly engaging the way?"

The *tenzo* said, "If you do not stumble over this question you are really a true person."

Dōgen did not understand this. And the *tenzo* left immediately. (*Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community,* Leighton/Okumura, SUNY 1996)

This encounter deeply influenced Dōgen's understanding and practice of dharma. In the *Tenzo-kyōkun* Dōgen wrote, "For whatever I have come to know about words and phrases and slightly understand about wholeheartedly engaging the way, I am grateful for that *tenzo*'s kindness."

Daily work is an important part of Zen practice. This is unique teaching of Zen, a gift that Sōtō Zen Buddhism can contribute to modern practitioners.

Three minds

At the end of *Tenzo-kyōkun,* Dōgen said that the cook and all the members of his community-from abbot to novice-should maintain three inner attitudes toward people we meet and things we encounter: Magnanimous Mind (*daishin*), Nurturing Mind (*rōshin*) and Joyful Mind (*kishin*).

Magnanimous Mind is like a great immovable mountain or an ocean accepting the waters of many rivers. Nurturing Mind is the attitude of parents toward their children, taking care of all people and things. Joyful Mind is the way we find joy in taking care of others even in the midst of difficulties. When we manifest these three minds (*sanshin*) in daily life, our *zazen* practice is working beyond the *zendō* walls.

Meditation (*Samadhi*)

Dōgen called his meditation practice *shikantaza,* which literally means "just sitting." In *shikantaza* we sit without the *koans* used in Rinzai Zen. In our *zazen,* body and mind sit without any techniques—*koans,* mantras, visualizations and so on. We find an upright posture, breathe through our nose quietly and deeply from our abdomen, and keep our eyes open. We let go of whatever thoughts arise within our mind. It is

simply sitting upright without any expectation or gaining idea. Dōgen's essential teaching is that practice and enlightenment are one. Practice is not a method to make a deluded person into an enlightened being. Practice without self-centeredness is itself enlightenment.

This kind of *zazen* practice teaches us to sit upright wherever we are. Sometimes our mind is calm and sometimes our mind is busy. Sometimes we feel peaceful, and sometimes we are in the midst of a storm. We neither cling to nor avoid any condition, but keep sitting in an upright posture. We try to live in this upright manner, not only in *zazen* but in our daily lives. When we deviate from uprightness, we are aware of it and return to it.

Shakyamuni Buddha's basic teaching is that we suffer because of greed, anger, and delusion—the three poisonous minds. Out of this suffering we create samsara. The reality of being is impermanence (*anti*), egolessness (*anatman*), and emptiness of any self-nature (*sunyata*). Because we are ignorant of this reality, when we encounter an object, we want to possess it—that is greed. When an object is something we don't like, we try to avoid it. But things can't be avoided, and so we become angry. We chase after what we like, and we run from things we don't like. This way of doing things creates a life of samsara. Sometimes we feel as happy as a god. But more often we feel like a hungry ghost or a hell dweller. The six realms of samsara symbolize our constantly up-and-down way of life. No condition lasts because things are always changing. Moment by moment, we experience happiness and unhappiness, pleasure and sorrow. We transmigrate moment by moment. There is no stability and peace of mind in our lives. This is the life of samsara.

When we see the instability and meaninglessness of life rooted in the three poisonous minds, we may begin to study Buddha's teachings or practice meditation. However, the three poisonous minds are still working, even within our intention to study and practice the dharma. Actually the aspiration to practice is itself a manifestation of the three poisons. We don't like samsara; we want to live in nirvana. We practice seeking after nirvana and escaping from samsara. This frame of mind is itself samsara. This is the basic problem we have in our practice.

We practice because of our aspiration, but if aspiration is itself an obstacle to freedom from samsara, what can we do? Can we practice

without using our will to practice? This is like pulling out the cushion we are sitting on. When we practice single-mindedly, we finally understand that even our determination can be an obstacle. Dōgen Zenji's teaching makes sense to us: "Just sit! Just practice!" Dōgen Zenji urges us to practice without any gaining idea. He urges us not to practice with the three poisonous mind. In the case of *zazen,* he teaches us to just sit (*shikantaza*).

Prajna (wisdom)

Dōgen Zenji was a prolific writer. His works include *Shōbōgenzō,* (*Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*), *Gakudō Yōjinshu* (*Points to Watch in Practicing the Way*), the *Eihei Shingi* and more. Dōgen's formal discourses in the dharma hall were recorded over almost 20 years, and compiled by his students as *Eihei-kōroku* (*Extensive Record of Eihei Dōgen*). He collected 300 *koans* into *Mana-shōbōgenzō*. These writings are all expressions of his profound insight of dharma based on *zazen* practice. Sōtō Zen Buddhists have been studying the works of Dōgen, Keizan, and other Sōtō Zen masters as the teachings of wisdom (*prajna*).

Dōgen's writing is highly respected in Japan and in the West, but difficult to understand by virtue of his unique manner of expression, wide knowledge and deep philosophy. Even in Japan we need to have a special kind of intellectual training in order to properly understand Dōgen's writings. We study *Shōbōgenzō* with the valuable commentaries of Sōtō scholars and monks from the Tokugawa period until today. In order to understand the writings of Dōgen and other Zen masters, it is also helpful to study the Buddhist sutras and commentaries, Zen literature, and Chinese and Japanese classics that these old Zen masters studied.

But studying Buddhist philosophy and Zen literature is still not enough. Dōgen said in *Genjō-koan:* "To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be verified by myriad dharmas. To be verified by myriad dharmas is to drop off body and mind of the self and the body and mind of the others."

When he uses the expression "dropping off body and mind" he refers

to the practice of *zazen.* To study the buddha way is nothing other than to practice *zazen* and let go of the self. To study Dōgen's writing in its true sense, we need to practice *zazen.*

In *Shōbōgenzō Makahannya-haramitsu,* Dōgen's comments on the *Heart Sutra,* he said:

> The time of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva practicing profound *prajna paramita* is the whole body clearly seeing the emptiness of all five aggregates. The five aggregates are forms, sensations, perceptions, predilections, and consciousness; this is the five-fold *prajna.* Clear seeing is itself *prajna.* To unfold and manifest this essential truth, [the *Heart Sutra*] states that "form is emptiness; emptiness is form." Form is nothing but form; emptiness is nothing but emptiness—100 blades of grass, 10,000 things. The 12 sense-fields are 12 instances of *prajna paramita.* Also, there are 18 instances of *prajna:* eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; form, sound, smell, taste, touch, objects of mind; as well as the consciousness of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Also, there are four instances of *prajna:* suffering, its cause, its cessation, and the path [to cessation]. Also, there are six instances of *prajna:* generosity, pure precepts, calm patience, diligence, quiet meditation, and wisdom. There is also a single instance of *prajna* manifesting itself right now—unsurpassable complete, perfect awakening. Also, there are three instances of *prajna:* past, present, and future. Also, there are six instances of *prajna:* earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness. Also, four instances of *prajna* are going on daily: walking, standing, sitting, and lying down.

According to Dōgen, studying *prajna* is studying the self by way of *zazen* and all the activities of our day-to-day lives. Even though precepts, meditation and wisdom are three basic studies, they are really one thing, never separate.

2 | *Texts on* Zazen

Fukan Zazengi: Universally Recommended Instructions for *Zazen*

Translated by Sōtō Zen Text Project

The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization? The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there special effort? Indeed, the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of traveling around to practice? And yet, if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance, attaining the Way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you are still short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?

Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you want to realize such, get to work on such right now.

For practicing Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Put aside all involvements and suspend all affairs. Do not think "good" or "bad." Do not judge true or false. Give up the operations of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop measuring with thoughts, ideas, and views. Have no designs on becoming a buddha.

How could that be limited to sitting or lying down?

At your sitting place, spread out a thick mat and put a cushion on it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh, then your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. Tie your robes loosely and arrange them neatly. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on your right palm, thumb-tips lightly touching. Straighten your body and sit upright, leaning neither left nor right, neither forward nor backward. Align your ears with your shoulders and your nose with your navel. Rest the tip of your tongue against the front of the roof of your mouth, with teeth together and lips shut. Always keep your eyes open, and breathe softly through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a breath and exhale fully, rock your body right and left, and settle into steady, immovable sitting. Think of not thinking. Not thinking—what kind of thinking is that? Nonthinking. This is the essential art of *zazen.* The *zazen* I speak of is not meditation practice. It is simply the dharma gate of joyful ease, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is the *koan* realized; traps and snares can never reach it. If you grasp the point, you are like a dragon gaining the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. For you must know that the true dharma appears of itself, so that from the start dullness and distraction are struck aside.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both mundane and sacred, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the power of *zazen*.

In addition, triggering awakening with a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, and effecting realization with a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout—these cannot be understood by discriminative thinking; much less can they be known through the practice of supernatural power. They must represent conduct beyond seeing and hearing. Are they not a standard prior to knowledge and views?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and the sharp-witted. If you concentrate

your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled. Going forward is, after all, an everyday affair.

In general, in our world and others, in both India and China, all equally hold the buddha-seal. While each lineage expresses its own style, they are all simply devoted to sitting, totally blocked in resolute stability. Although they say that there are 10,000 distinctions and 1,000 variations, they just wholeheartedly engage the way in *zazen.* Why leave behind the seat in your own home to wander in vain through the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you stumble past what is directly in front of you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential activity of the buddha-way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a dart of lightning—emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honored followers of Zen, long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not doubt the true dragon. Devote your energies to the way of direct pointing at the real. Revere the one who has gone beyond learning and is free from effort. Accord with the enlightenment of all the buddhas; succeed to the samadhi of all the ancestors. Continue to live in such a way, and you will be such a person. The treasure store will open of itself, and you may enjoy it freely.

Selections from:

Shōbōgenzō Bendōwa: Talk on Wholehearted Practice of the Way

Translated by Shohaku Okumura and Taigen Dan Leighton

All buddha-tathagatas together have been simply transmitting wondrous dharma and actualizing *anuttara samyak sambodhi* for which there is an unsurpassable, unfabricated, wondrous method[1]. This wondrous dharma, which has been transmitted only from buddha to buddha without deviation, has as its criterion *jijuyū-zanmai.*[2]

For disporting oneself freely in this samadhi, practicing *zazen* in an upright posture is the true gate.[3] Although this dharma is abundantly inherent in each person, it is not manifested without practice, it is not attained without realization.

******

For all ancestors and buddhas who have been dwelling in and maintaining buddha-dharma, practicing upright sitting in *jijuyū-zanmai* is the true path for opening up enlightenment.[4] Both in India and in China, those who have attained enlightenment have followed this way. This is because each teacher and each disciple has been intimately and correctly transmitting this subtle method and receiving and maintaining its true spirit.

According to the unmistakenly handed down tradition, the straightforward buddha-dharma that has been simply transmitted is supreme among the supreme. From the time you begin practicing with a teacher, the practices of incense burning, bowing, *nembutsu,* repentance, and reading sutras are not at all essential; just sit, dropping off body and mind.[5]

When one displays the buddha mudra with one's whole body and mind, sitting upright in this samadhi even for a short time, everything in the entire dharma world becomes buddha mudra, and all space in the universe completely becomes enlightenment.[6] Therefore, it enables buddha-tathagatas to increase the dharma joy of their own original

grounds and renew the adornment of the way of awakening. Simultaneously, all living beings of the dharma world in the ten directions and six realms become clear and pure in body and mind, realize great emancipation, and their own original face appears. At that time, all things together awaken to supreme enlightenment and utilize buddha-body, immediately go beyond the culmination of awakening, and sit upright under the kingly bodhi tree.[7] At the same time, they turn the incomparable, great dharma wheel and begin expressing ultimate and unfabricated profound *prajna.*

There is a path through which the *anuttara samyak sambodhi* of all things returns [to the person in *zazen*], and whereby [that person and the enlightenment of all things] intimately and imperceptibly assist each other. Therefore this *zazen* person without fail drops off body and mind, cuts away previous tainted views and thoughts, awakens genuine buddha-dharma, universally helps the buddha work in each place, as numerous as atoms, where buddha-tathagatas teach and practice, and widely influences practitioners who are going beyond buddha, thereby vigorously exalting the dharma that goes beyond buddha.[8] At this time, because earth, grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles, all things in the dharma realm in 10 directions, carry out buddha work, therefore everyone receives the benefit of wind and water movement caused by this functioning, and all are imperceptibly helped by the wondrous and incomprehensible influence of buddha to actualize the enlightenment at hand. Since those who receive and use this water and fire extend the buddha influence of original enlightenment, all who live and talk with these people also share and universally unfold the boundless buddha virtue and they circulate the inexhaustible, ceaseless, incomprehensible, and immeasurable buddha-dharma within and without the whole dharma world. However, these various [mutual influences] do not mix into the perceptions of this person sitting, because they take place within stillness without any fabrication, and they are enlightenment itself. If practice and enlightenment were separate as people commonly believe, it would be possible for them to perceive each other.[9] But that which is associated with perceptions cannot be the standard of enlightenment because deluded human sentiment cannot reach the standard of enlightenment.

Moreover, although both mind and object appear and disappear within stillness, because this takes place in the realm of self-receiving and self-employing (*jijuyū*) without moving a speck of dust or destroying a single form, extensive buddha work and profound, subtle buddha influence are carried out.[10] The grass, trees, and earth affected by this functioning radiate great brilliance together and endlessly expound the deep, wondrous dharma. Grasses and trees, fences and walls demonstrate and exalt it for the sake of living beings, both ordinary and sage; and in turn, living beings both ordinary and sage, express and unfold it for the sake of grasses and trees, fences and walls. The realm of self-awakening and awakening others is fundamentally endowed with the quality of enlightenment with nothing lacking, and allows the standard of enlightenment to be actualized ceaselessly.

Therefore, even if only one person sits for a short time, because this *zazen* is one with all existence and completely permeates all time, it performs everlasting buddha guidance within the inexhaustible dharma world in the past, present and future. [*Zazen*] is equally the same practice and the same enlightenment for both the person sitting and for all dharmas[11]. The melodious sound continues to resonate as it echoes, not only during sitting practice, but before and after striking *sunyata,* which continues endlessly before and after a hammer hits it.[12] Not only that, but all things are endowed with original practice within the original face, which is impossible to measure.

You should know that even if all the buddhas in the 10 directions, as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, together engage the full power of their buddha wisdom, they could never reach the limit, or measure or comprehend the virtue, of one person's *zazen.*

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Now we have heard that the virtue of this *zazen* is immense. Stupid people may question this by asking, "There are many gates to the buddha-dharma. Why do you only recommend zazen?"

REPLY:

It is because this is the true gate to buddha-dharma.

******

Why is this alone the true gate?

REPLY:
Great Teacher Shakyamuni correctly transmitted the wondrous method for attaining the Way, and the tathagatas of the three times (past, present, and future) also all attain the Way through *zazen.* For this reason, [*zazen*] has been conveyed from one person to another as the true gate. Not only that, but all the ancestors of India and China attained the Way through *zazen*. Therefore I am now showing the true gate to human and celestial beings.

******

As for the practice of *zazen,* people who have not yet realized buddha-dharma should attain enlightenment through practicing the way of *zazen.*[13] But what could those who have already clarified the true buddha-dharma expect from doing *zazen?*

REPLY:
Although it is said that one should not relate dreams to fools and it is useless to give oars to mountain folks, I will give you further instruction.

Thinking that practice and enlightenment are not one is no more than a view that is outside the Way [that is, deluded]. In buddha-dharma, practice and enlightenment are one and the same. Because it is the practice of enlightenment, a beginner's wholehearted practice of the Way is exactly the totality of original enlightenment. For this reason, in conveying the essential attitude for practice, it is taught not to wait for enlightenment outside practice. This must be so because [this practice] is the directly indicated original enlightenment. Since it is already the enlightenment of practice, enlightenment is endless; since it is the practice of enlightenment, practice is beginningless. Therefore, both Shakyamuni Tathagata and Venerable

Mahakashyapa were accepted and used in the practice of enlightenment, and in the same manner Great Teacher Bodhidharma and Great Ancestor Daikan [the Sixth Ancestor] were pulled and turned in the practice of enlightenment. Traces of dwelling in and maintaining buddha-dharma are all like this.

Already there is practice not separate from enlightenment, and fortunately for us, this wholehearted engaging the Way with beginner's mind, which transmits the undivided wondrous practice, is exactly attaining undivided original enlightenment in the ground of nonfabrication. We must know that, in order not to allow defilement of enlightenment inseparable from practice, the buddha ancestors vigilantly teach us not to slacken practice.[14] When wondrous practice is cast off original enlightenment fills our hands; when we are free from original enlightenment wondrous practice is carried out through the whole body.

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1 Tathagata is one of the 10 epithets for Buddha; it literally means "thus come, thus gone." It is used together with buddha for emphasis.

"Simply transmitting" is *tanden* (単伝), literally single or simple transmission, which implies that the transmission is direct between buddhas, that only the dharma is transmitted, and that it is transmitted completely.

Anuttara samyak sambodhi is incomparable awareness, the supreme enlightenment of Buddha. "Wondrous dharma" is *myōhō* (妙法); *myō* means "wondrous, subtle, excellent, ungraspable"; *dharma* refers to truth or reality, the elements or objects of reality, or the teaching about reality. *Myōhō* is one translation of *saddharma. Saddharma* is also translated as *shōbō*, true dharma, the *shōbō* of Dōgen's masterwork *Shōbōgenzō*. The "wondrous method," *myōjutsu,* might also be translated as "subtle craft." Although this practice might be said to have a method, craft, or criterion, this term as used here by Dōgen is provocative and even ironic, as it is not a method or technique to arrive at some dualistic result not already present, and is not separate from the "wondrous dharma" itself.

2 *Jijuyū-zanmai* is literally the "samadhi of self-fulfillment" or "self-enjoyment," or the "samadhi of self receiving or accepting its function." *Ji* is "self"; *juyū* as a common compound means "fulfillment or enjoyment." *Ju* alone is "receive" or "accept"; *yu* alone is "function" or "use." Zanmai is samadhi, or concentration. So we can understand this samadhi of self-fulfillment and enjoyment as the samadhi or concentration on the self when it simply receives and accepts its function, or its spiritual position in the world. The important point is that this is not the self that has an object. There is nothing other than or outside of this self. The enjoyment, fulfillment, or satisfaction is the samadhi of the self, of which there is no other. This is not an experience that is somewhere other than here and now, it is not something to be acquired or gained. *Jijuyū* is often contrasted with *tajuyū,* others receiving the enjoyment of dharma. Historically, *tajuyū* refers to other beings receiving the benefits of bodhisattva practice. In the case of Dōgen Zenji's *jijuyū,* there is no *ta. Ta* is included in *ji.* Everything becomes everything, all becomes all. *Jijuyū* samadhi is buddha's practice. In *Shōbōgenzō Genjōkoan,* Dōgen Zenji says, "To study the buddha way is to study the Self; to study the Self is to forget the Self; to forget the Self is to be enlightened by myriad dharmas; to be enlightened by myriad dharmas is to drop off the body and mind of self and others." This is *jijuyū-zanmai*. This actually occurs in *zazen.*

3 "Disporting oneself freely," *yuge* (遊戯), could also be translated as "play freely." The characters in a later version of the text are *yuke* (遊化), which means "to go out and expound the teaching."

4 The section beginning with this sentence, "For all ancestors and buddhas who have been dwelling in and maintaining buddha-dharma..." and going to the first question below is chanted daily as a separate text in Sōtō Zen temples and referred to as the *Jijuyū-zanmai,* or Samadhi of Self-fulfillment.

5 *Nembutsu* was originally the practice of chanting the name and

visualizing the image of any buddha or buddha land, and only later, in Pure Land Buddhism, came to mean chanting the name of Amitabha; repentance, *shusan* (修懺) in Japanese, refers to the *fusatsu* (*posadha* in Sanskrit), a ceremony of repentance and taking vows and refuge that occurs regularly in Buddhist communities. "Dropping off body and mind" is an important term for Dōgen. Dōgen indicates here that these practices should come from *shinjin datsuraku* (dropping off body and mind), in other words *zazen;* they should be expressions of *shikantaza* (just sitting); otherwise they are meaningless.

This could also be read literally as "From the time you begin practicing with a teacher, do not use [these practices], just sit, dropping off body and mind...." This is to say that such practices should not be *used as instruments* to attain spiritual advancement. Rather, they should be enacted as expressions of self-fulfilling samadhi. In his own practice Dōgen continued to engage in all of these specific practice activities with this attitude.

6 "Whole body and mind" is literally "body, speech, and mind." This complex passage, beginning "When one displays the buddha mudra, ..." reflects the non-anthropocentric basis of Buddhist thought and practice. The active realization embodied and supported in self-fulfilling samadhi includes not only humans and other creatures, but even the land and soil, and the "grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles" Dōgen mentions below. Even things usually considered inanimate objects in Western philosophy vitally partake of this awakening and mutually resonate to encourage the subtle, mysterious buddha guidance or influence in all of us. This Buddhist view of our environment and all the things that make it up as alive and intimately connected with us rather than a collection of dead objects, has become of great interest to modern thinkers concerned with the threats of environmental degradation and the underlying attitudes that have helped endanger our ecology.

7 The six realms are hell, the realms of hungry ghosts, of animals, of *asuras* (titans), of human beings, and of heavenly beings. "Supreme

enlightenment" in this sentence is *shōgaku* (正覚) in Japanese; this refers to anuttara samyak sambodhi.

8 "Each place" is *dōjō* (道場), a place where buddha-tathagatas practice and manifest the buddha-dharma.

9 The somewhat ambiguous phrase, "It would be possible for them to perceive each other," might be interpreted as "It should be possible for practice and enlightenment to be perceived separately."

10 "Mind and object" could be understood as subject and object. "Appear and disappear" is a translation of *shō nyū go shutsu* (証入悟出), literally "enlightened entering and enlightened leaving."

11 Dōgen says literally, "Equal same practice and same enlightenment for both this and that." The understood subject is *zazen,* or the whole activity of buddha work which Dōgen has been describing. We have translated "this and that" or "it, it" as "the person sitting and all dharmas." However, these words may also imply the distinction of ordinary people and sages, as well as that of subject and object represented by the person sitting and all phenomena.

12 *Sunyata* is literally "empty space." Dōgen refers to the Buddhist teaching of *sunyata,* sometimes translated as emptiness; however, it actually means the complete interdependence of all things. With this image Dōgen recalls the poem "Windbell" by his teacher, Tendō Nyojō:

> *The whole body of a windbell, like a mouth hanging*
> *in emptiness (*sunyata*),*
> *Without choosing which direction the wind*
> *comes from,*
> *For the sake of others equally speaks*
> prajna *(*wisdom*)....* [our translation]

13 The character for enlightenment here is *shō* (証), which also means

verification, proof, or authentication. This character is used for enlightenment throughout Dōgen's reply.

14 This refers to a dialogue between the Sixth Ancestor and Nangaku Ejō (677–744, Nunyue Huairang in Chinese). The Sixth Ancestor asked, "What is this that thus comes?" After eight years Nangaku was able to answer, "Any explanation misses it." The Sixth Ancestor asked, "If so, is there practice and enlightenment?" Nangaku responded, "It is not that there is no practice and enlightenment, but only that they cannot be defiled." The Sixth Ancestor agreed, saying, "It is just this nondefilement that all buddha ancestors maintain."

(This section is taken from *The Wholehearted Way* by Shohaku Okumura and Taigen Dan Leighton, Tuttle Publishing, 1997)

Selections from:

Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki[1]: The Sayings of Dōgen Zenji

Recorded by Koun Ejō Zenji
Translated by Shohaku Okumura
Edited by Hozan Alan Senauke

1-1
Being a child of the Buddha means following the Buddha's teaching and arriving directly at buddhahood. We must try to practice in complete accord with the Buddha's teaching. The true practice which accords with the Buddha's teaching is *shikantaza,* on which everyday practice in this community (*sōrin*)[2] is based. Consider this deeply.

1-2
Practitioners of the Way have to maintain regulations laid down by Zen Master *Hyakujō*.[3] The form of maintaining regulations is simply receiving and observing the precepts and practicing *zazen.* The meaning of reciting the *Precept Sutra*[4] day and night, and of observing the precepts single-mindedly is nothing but doing *shikantaza* in accord with the practice of ancient masters. When we sit *zazen,* what precepts are not observed, what merits are not actualized? The activities practiced by ancient masters have profound meanings. Without holding our individual views and preferences, we should go along with people in the community and rely on the Way of ancient masters, maintaining our practice.

1-4
For a Zen monk, the primary Way to improve oneself is to practice *shikantaza.* Without concern about being clever or stupid, you will naturally improve if you practice *zazen.*

1-14
Ejō asked, "In studying the Buddha Way, what practice should we choose to devote ourselves to?" Dōgen replied: "It depends upon one's character or capabilities. However, until now, *zazen* has been practiced

and handed down the communities of ancestors. This practice is suitable for all people, and can be practiced by those of superior, mediocre, or inferior capabilities. When I was in China in the assembly of my late master Tendō Nyojō, I sat *zazen* day and night after I heard this.

2-9

Once, while in China, I was reading a collection of sayings by an ancient master. At that time, a monk from Shisen (Shi-chuan) who was a sincere practitioner of the Way, asked me, "What's the use of reading recorded sayings?" I replied, "I want to learn the deeds of ancient masters." The monk asked, "What is the use of that?" I said, "I will teach people after I return home." The monk asked, "What is the use of that." I said, "It's for the sake of benefiting living beings." The monk asked, "Ultimately, what is the use?"

Later, I considered this and thought, "Learning the deeds of ancient masters by reading recorded sayings or *koans* or explaining them to deluded people; these are all ultimately of no use for my own practice and for teaching others. Even if I don't know a single letter, I will be able to show the truth to others in inexhaustible Ways if I devote myself to just sitting and clarify the Great Matter." This is why that monk said to me, "Ultimately, what is the use?" I thought this to be the truth. Thereupon, I gave up reading the recorded sayings and other texts, concentrated wholeheartedly upon sitting, and was able to clarify the Great Matter.

2-22

Sitting itself is the practice of the Buddha. Sitting itself is not-doing[5]. It is nothing but the true form of the Self[6]. Apart from this, there is nothing to seek as the buddha-dharma.

2-25

When I stayed at the Tendō[7] monastery in China, while the old master Nyojō was the abbot there, we sat *zazen* until about 11 o'clock at night and got up at about half-past two in the morning to sit *zazen.* The abbot sat with the assembly in the monk's hall, never taking even one night off. During sitting, many monks fell asleep. The abbot walked around, hit

sleeping monks with his fist or his slipper, abused and exhorted them to awaken from their sleep. If they continued to sleep, he went to the *shōdō*[8], rang a bell, and called the attendants to light the candles. Suddenly he would give speech like this:

> What is the use of sleeping wastefully? Why then do you gather in a monks' hall? Why did you become a monk and enter a monastery? Consider the emperor and government officials; who among them leads an easy life? The emperor governs with justice. The ministers serve with loyalty and so on, down to the commoners. Who leads an easy life without labor?
>
> You have avoided these labors, entered a monastery, and spend your time wastefully. After all, what is the use of this? Life-and-death is the Great Matter. Everything is impermanent and changes swiftly. Both teaching schools and Zen schools emphasize this. This evening or tomorrow morning we may die or we may become sick. We do not know how death may come about, or what kind of sickness we may contract. While you are alive, for the time being, it is stupid to pass time meaninglessly, sleeping or lying down, without practicing buddha-dharma. Since you are like this, the buddha-dharma is dying. When people devotedly practiced *zazen,* the buddha dharma flourished throughout the country. As of late, the buddha-dharma is falling into decay because no one will promote *zazen.*

With my own eyes I saw him thus encourage monks in the assembly and make them sit *zazen.*

2-26

Is the Way attained through mind or body? In the philosophical schools, it is said that since body and mind are not separate, the Way is attained through the body. Yet, it is not clear that we attain the Way through the body, because they say "since" body and mind are not separate. In Zen, the Way is attained through both body and mind.

As long as we only think about buddha-dharma with our minds, the Way will never be grasped, even in a thousand lifetimes or a myriad of eons. When we let go of our minds and cast aside our views and

understanding, the Way will be actualized. Reiun[9], for example, clarified true mind (the reality of life) when he saw peach blossoms, and Kyōgen[10] realized the Way when he heard the sound of a piece of tile hitting bamboo. They attained the Way through their bodies. Therefore, when we completely cast aside our thoughts and views and practice *shikantaza,* we will become intimate with the Way. For this reason, there is no doubt that the Way is attained through the body. This is why I encourage you to practice *zazen* wholeheartedly.

4-14

When Zen-master Hōe of Mt. Yōgi[11] first became the abbot, the temple was dilapidated and monks were suffering. Therefore, an officer said it should be repaired. The master said:

> "Even though the building is broken down, it is certainly a better place for practicing *zazen* than on the ground or under a tree. If one section is broken and leaks, we should stay where it does not leak and practice *zazen.* If monks can attain enlightenment by building a hall, we should construct one of gold and jewels. But enlightenment does not depend on whether the building is good or bad; it depends only upon our diligence in *zazen*"

5-23

The essence of learning the Way is the practice of *zazen.* In China, many people attained the Way entirely through the power of *zazen.* If one concentrates on practicing *zazen* continuously, even an ignorant person who does not understand a single question, can be superior to an intelligent person who has been studying for a long time. Therefore, practitioners must practice *shikantaza* wholeheartedly without concerning themselves with other things. The Way of buddhas and ancestors is nothing but *zazen.* Do not pursue anything else.

At the time, Ejo asked, "In studying, when I read the collections of old masters' sayings or koans, I can understand one thing out of a hundred or a thousand words, yet I have no such experience in *zazen.* Should we still prefer to practice *zazen*?"

Dōgen replied; "Even if you may seem to have some understanding

while you read *koans,* such studies will lead you astray from the Way of buddhas and ancestors. To spend your time sitting upright with nothing to be gained and nothing to be realized is the Way of the ancestors. Although ancient masters encouraged both reading and seated *zazen,* they still promoted sitting wholeheartedly. Although there are some who have gained enlightenment using stories of the old masters, the attainment of this enlightenment is due to the merit of sitting. True merit depends on sitting."

5-18
Do not think that you study buddha dharma for the sake of gaining profit as a reward for practicing the Buddha Way. Just practice buddha-dharma for the sake of the buddha-dharma. Even if you study 1,000 sutras and 10,000 commentaries, even if you have sat *zazen* until your cushion is worn out, it is impossible to attain the Way of buddhas and ancestors if this attitude is lacking.

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1 *Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki* is a collection of Dōgen Zenji's sayings recorded by Ejō Zenji, Dōgen's dharma heir. When these talks were recorded, Dōgen had just founded his first monastery, Kōshōji in Fukakusa, Kyoto. In *Zuimonki,* Dōgen repeatedly talks about *zazen,* pure poverty, being free from desire for fame and personal profit, parting from narrow personal views, and following one's teacher as the basic attitude of a practitioner. Here, the sections in which Dōgen Zenji emphasizes the practice of *zazen* have been selected.

2 *Sōrin* literally means a forest; a place where various kinds of trees live together.

3 Zen-master Hyakujō (Baizhang Huaihai, 720–814), wrote the *Hyakujō Shingi,* the first recorded regulations for a Zen monastery. Consequently, he is regarded as the founder of the formal Zen monastery.

4 This is the *Bonmōkyō* (Sanskrit; *Brahmajala Sutra*) which presents the

Mahayana precepts for *bodhisattvas.*

5 In Japanese, *fui,* (also *mui*), means not-doing or not-action; being natural without fabricating one's reality through discriminations or attachments.

6 Literally, the Japanese expression means the "true body of the self", that is, the reality of the self which precedes discrimination.

7 In Chinese, Tiantong.

8 A hall behind the monks' hall (*sōdō*) where the head monk gives talks on behalf of the abbot.

9 Lingyun Zhigin (?–?) was one of the disciples of Isan Reiyū (Guishan Lingyou).

10 Xiangyan Zhixian (?–840) was also one of the disciples of Isan Reiyū (Guishan Lingyou).

11 Yangi Fanghui (966–1049).

Selections from:

Zazen Yōjinki[1]: Things We Should Be Careful about Regarding *Zazen*

By Keizan Jōkin Zenji[2]
Translated by Shohaku Okumura
Edited by Hozan Alan Senauke

Zazen allows a person to clarify the mind-ground[3] and dwell comfortably in one's original nature[4]. This is called revealing the original Self and manifesting the original-ground.

In *zazen* both body and mind drop off. *Zazen* is far beyond the form of sitting or lying down. Free from considerations of good and evil, *zazen* transcends distinctions between ordinary people and sages, it goes far beyond judgements of deluded or enlightened. *Zazen* includes no boundary between sentient beings and buddha. Therefore put aside all affairs, and let go of all associations. Do nothing at all. The six senses produce nothing.

******

Now, *zazen* is entering directly into the ocean of buddha-nature and manifesting the body of the Buddha. The pure and clear mind is actualized in the present moment; the original light shines everywhere. The water in the ocean neither increases nor decreases, and the waves never cease. Buddhas have appeared in this world for the sake of the One Great Matter; to show the wisdom and insight of the Buddha to all living beings and to make their entry possible. For this, there is a peaceful and pure way: *zazen.* This is nothing but the *jijuyū-zanmai* of all buddhas. It is also called *zanmai-ōzanmai* (the King of Samadhis). If you dwell in this samadhi for even a short time, the mind-ground will be directly clarified. You should know that this is the true gate of the buddha-way.

If you wish to clarify the mind-ground, you should relinquish your various types of limited knowledge and understanding. Throw away both worldly affairs and buddha-dharma. Eliminate all delusive emotions. When the true mind of the sole Reality is manifest, the clouds of

delusion will clear away and the moon of the Mind will shine brightly.

The Buddha said, "Listening and thinking are like being outside of the gate; *zazen* is returning home and sitting in peace." How true this is! When we are listening and thinking, the various views have not been put to rest and the mind is still running over. Therefore other activities are like being outside of the gate. *Zazen* alone brings everything to rest and, flowing freely, reaches everywhere. So *zazen* is like returning home and sitting in peace.

The delusions of the five-obstructions (*gogai*)[5] all arise out of basic ignorance (*mumyō*)[6]. Being ignorant means not clarifying the Self. To practice *zazen* is to clarify the Self. Even though the five obstructions are eliminated, if basic ignorance is not eliminated, you are not a buddha-ancestor. If you wish to eliminate basic ignorance, *zazen* practice of the Way is the key.

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An ancient master said, "When delusive thoughts cease, tranquility arises; when tranquility arises, wisdom appears; when wisdom appears, reality reveals itself."

If you want to eliminate delusive thoughts, you should cease to discriminate between good and evil. Give up all affairs with which you are involved; do not occupy your mind with any concerns nor become physically engaged in any activity. This is the primary point to bear in mind. When delusive objects disappear, delusive mind falls away.

When delusive mind disappears, the unchanging reality manifests itself and we are always clearly aware. It is not extinction; it is not activity. Therefore, you should avoid engaging in any arts or crafts, medicine or fortune-telling. Needless to say, you should stay away from music and dancing, arguing and meaningless discussions, fame and personal profit. While composing poetry can be a way to purify one's mind, do not be fond of it. Give up writing and calligraphy. This is the fine precedent set by practitioners of the Way. This is essential for harmonizing the mind.

Wear neither luxurious clothing nor dirty rags. Luxurious clothing gives rise to greed and may also arouse fear of theft. Thus, they are a

hindrance for a practitioner of the way. Even if someone offers them to you, it is the excellent tradition of the masters to refuse them. If you already own luxurious clothes, do not keep them. Even if these clothes are stolen, do not chase after or regret its loss. Old or dirty clothes should be washed and mended; clean them thoroughly before wearing them. If you do not clean them, they will cause you to become chilled and sick. This will be a hindrance to your practice. Although we should not be anxious about bodily life, insufficient clothing, insufficient food, and insufficient sleep are called the three insufficiencies and will cause our practice to suffer.

Do not indulge in fine foods. It is not only bad for your body and mind, but also shows you are not yet free from greed. Eat just enough food to support your life and do not be fond of its taste. If you sit after eating too much, you will get sick. Wait for a while before sitting after eating big or small meals. Monks must be moderate in eating.

******

During *zazen,* your body may feel hot or cold, rough or smooth, stiff or loose, heavy or light, or astonishingly wide-awake. Such sensations are caused by a disharmony of mind and breath. You should regulate your breathing as follows: open your mouth for a little while, letting long breaths be long and short breaths be short, and harmonize it gradually. Follow your breath for a while; when awareness (*kakusoku*) comes, your breathing will be naturally harmonized. After that, breathe naturally through your nose.

Your mind may feel as though it is sinking or floating, dull or sharp, or as though you can see outside the room, inside your body, or the body of buddhas or bodhisattvas. Sometimes, you may feel as though you have wisdom and can understand the sutras or commentaries thoroughly. These unusual and strange conditions are all sicknesses that occur when the mind and breath are not in harmony. When you have this kind of sickness, settle your mind on your feet. When you feel dull (*konchin*), place your mind on your hairline (three inches above the center of the eyebrows) or between your eyes. When your mind is distracted (*sanran*), place it on the tip of your nose or on your lower abdomen, one and a

half inches below the navel (*tanden*). Usually, place your mind on the left palm during sitting. When you sit for a long time, even though you do not try to calm your mind, it will, of its own accord, be free of distraction.

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Also, although the ancient teachings are the traditional instructions for illuminating the mind, do not read, write, or listen to them too much. Running to excess scatters the mind.

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Do not sit where there are fires, floods, high winds, thieves; by the ocean, near bars, brothels, where widows or virgins live, or near places where courtesans play music. Do not live near kings, ministers, rich and powerful families, or people who have many desires, who seek after fame, who like to argue meaninglessly.

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Although grand Buddhist ceremonies or the building of large temples are very good things, people who devote themselves to *zazen* should not be involved in such activities.

Do not be delighted by large assemblies; nor covet disciples. Do not practice and study too many things. Do not sit where it is too bright or too dark, too cold or too hot; nor should you sit where idle pleasure-seekers and harlots live. Stay in a monastery where you have a good teacher and fellow practitioners. Or reside in the deep mountains or glens. A good place to practice *kinhin* is where there is clear water and green mountains. A good place for purifying the mind is by a stream or under a tree. Contemplate impermanence; do not forget it. This will encourage you to seek the Way.

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The *zabuton* (mat) should be thick enough for comfortable sitting. The *dōjō* (place for practice) should be clean. Always burn incense and offer flowers to the guardians of the dharma, the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who secretly protect your practice. If you enshrine a statue of a buddha, bodhisattva, or an arhat, no demons can tempt you.

Remain always compassionate, and dedicate the limitless virtue of *zazen* to all living beings. Do not be arrogant; do not be proud of yourself and of your understanding of dharma. Being arrogant is the way of non-buddhist and ignorant people.

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Vow to cut off all delusions and realize enlightenment. Just sit without doing anything. This is the essence of *sanzen*.

Always wash your eyes and feet, keep your body and mind at ease and tranquil, and maintain a proper demeanor.

Throw away worldly sentiments, yet do not attach yourself to a sublime feeling of the way.

Though you should not begrudge anyone the dharma, do not preach it unless you are asked. Even if someone asks, keep silent three times; if the person still asks you from his or her heart, then teach him or her. Out of 10 times you may desire to speak, remain silent for nine; as if mold were growing around your mouth. Be like a folded fan in December, or like a wind-bell hanging in the air, indifferent to the direction of the wind. This is how a person of the Way should be. Do not use the dharma to profit at the expense of others. Do not use the way as a means to make yourself important.

These are the most important points to keep in mind.

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1 *Zazen Yōjinki* was written by Keizan Zenji as a manual for *zazen.* Literally, *yōjin* means to be cautious or careful. *Ki* means record or notes.

2 Keizan Jōkin Zenji (1268–1325) became a monk under Koun Ejō Zenji when he was 13 years old. After Ejō's death, he practiced with

Tettsū Gikai (1219–1309), the dharma heir of Ejō, and received transmission from him. Keizan Zenji educated many disciples and founded a number of temples such as Sōjiji, Yōkōji, and Jōmanji. Through his disciples, Sōtō Zen spread broadly. Eiheiji, founded by Dōgen Zenji, and Sōjiji are the two main monasteries of Japanese Sōtō Zen today.

3 The true mind inherent in all living beings is compared to the earth or ground from which everything grows. Buddha-nature.

4 The nature of the true Self, which is beyond any distinction between enlightened and deluded.

5 The five obstructions which prevent our mind from being aware and functioning normally are greed, anger, indolence, agitation and doubt.

6 Basic ignorance is a translation of *mumyō* (Skt., *avidya*). Literally, it means "no-light" (of wisdom).

Jūniji-hōgo[1]: On Practicing Throughout the Day

By Daichi Sokei Zenji[2]
Translated by Shohaku Okumura
Edited by Hozan Alan Senauke

What the buddhas and ancestors properly transmit is nothing but sitting. When you sit, hold your hands in *hokkaijōin,* cross your legs, keep your body upright without leaning. Do not think of anything, do not be concerned with anything, not even the buddha-dharma. This is beyond buddha, and the cycle of life and death. Once you have thrown yourself into the ocean of the vows of the buddhas[3], just conduct yourself with the demeanor of a buddha, and forgo attachment to your own body. The demeanor of a buddha means that once you enter a temple, you must not visit the homes of lay people; just practice according to the regulations of the temple. While living at the temple, regulations prescribe the conduct to be followed throughout the day and night. If you spend each day and night, practicing fully in accord with the regulations of the buddha ancestors, for one year, two years, your whole life will be as the activities of a single day and night.

The day begins at the Hour of the Tiger (3 am). Get up when you hear the sound of the morning bell and drum, put on your *kesa* (robe), and sit *zazen* until the middle of the Hour of the Rabbit (6 am). If this is too long for you, ring the bell at the middle of the Hour of the Tiger (4 am), and continue to sit until the middle of the Hour of the Rabbit (6 am). Spend the Hour of the Tiger free from the karma of life and death (samsara)[4].

At the end of the Hour of the Rabbit, have gruel for breakfast. At this point, give up the mind of *zazen.* Concentrate on eating gruel; reflecting on the six *paramitas,* tasting the six flavors (bitter, sour, sweet, spicy, salty, and simple), and chanting the ten benefits of eating gruel[5]. Do not think of anything good, or anything evil. When you have breakfast, just attend fully to the gruel with both body and mind, and do not be concerned with *zazen* or any other activities. This is called clarifying the time of gruel and realizing the mind of gruel.[6] At this very time, you have a pure realization of the mind of the buddha ancestors.

At the Hour of the Dragon (7 am), if it is still dark, practice as if it were the Hour of the Rabbit. The point of sutra-chanting is just to hold the sutra book with both hands and to chant wholeheartedly, forgetting both *zazen* and the meal. Do not pay attention to anything else. This is called realizing and clarifying the chanting of the sutras. At that very time the karma of life and death is exhausted and you will enter the rank of the buddha ancestors. After the practice of chanting, rest for a while. When you rest, be careful not to think or speak about meaningless worldly affairs.

From the middle of the Hour of the Dragon to the middle of the Hour of the Snake (8 am to 10 am), burn incense, ring the bell, and sit *zazen.* When doing *zazen,* cast off thoughts of both the buddha ancestors, and of good or bad in the secular world. Being free from thought and activity is called *zazen.* This is also called *zanmai-ōzanmai* (the King of Samadhis). Sitting *zazen* for even a little while is the main practice which goes beyond the pinnacle of buddhahood[7]. The karma of life and death is exhausted, enabling one to the rank of buddha ancestors.

After *zazen,* rest until lunchtime. There are rules for this time of rest. Respect your elders as you respect the Buddha, even if they are only one year senior to you. Care for the sick as if they were your mother or father. Do not speak loudly, nor chat about meaningless worldly affairs. Do not forget the impermanence of life and death, that you may die before you take your next breath. Conduct yourself in accordance with the buddha dharma when you sit on the floor in the *sōdō* (monks' hall), when you go out of the hall, when you walk, or when you talk quietly with people. These are the rules to follow while resting.

Have lunch at the beginning of the Hour of the Horse (11 am). Remember the points mentioned earlier regarding breakfast; for then the karma of life and death will be exhausted and you will join the rank of the buddha ancestors. The time from the Hour of the Sheep to the middle of the Monkey (1 pm to 4 pm) is unscheduled. As I cautioned earlier, be careful not to forget that the matter of life and death is great, and that things are impermanent and change very swiftly. You should lament having spent time wastefully in any situation whatsoever. This is how to use your mind in the Hour of the Sheep. Then there will be no karma of life and death and you will join the rank of the buddha

ancestors.

From the middle of the Hour of the Monkey to the middle of the Hour of the Chicken (4 pm to 6 pm), sit *zazen.* Remember my earlier advice on *zazen.* Then the karma of life and death will be exhausted and your body and mind will join the rank of the buddha ancestors.

You may skip sutra-chanting and have free time from the middle of the Hour of the Chicken (6 pm) to the beginning of the Hour of the Dog (7pm). Do not worry about things except for the day's swift passing, and see that impermanence exists in each moment. At that time, your body and mind are those of the buddha ancestors.

Sit during the Hour of the Dog (7 pm to 9 pm). Be alert as mentioned above. Then the karma of life and death will be exhausted and your body and mind will be those of the buddha ancestors. You are free during the Hour of the Wild Boar (9 pm to 11 pm). Although this is free time, act in accordance with your aspiration and sit if you like, lie down if you like. Or if you wish, return to the dormitory and take comfort in talking over the buddha dharma with others. These are the best things to do. Needless to say, a quiet atmosphere should be maintained if you sit. Also, if you return to the dormitory and lie down, do so as the Buddha did. Do not think of sleeping as a trifling thing compared to *zazen* or sutra-chanting. The Buddha's sleeping posture is as follows; lie down on your right side and do not untie the belt of your robe. Do not think of the buddha-dharma, much less of things having to do with life and death. Just sleep. Then, the karma of life and death is exhausted, and your body and mind are nothing but the buddha ancestors.

According to Sakyamuni Buddha, you should go to bed at the beginning of the Hour of the Mouse (11 pm) and get up at the beginning of the Hour of the Tiger (3 am). So the Hour of the Mouse is the time to sleep. It is also fine to sit *zazen.* When it is quiet in your hermitage at night and the moon is shinning brightly, it is excellent to sit on your sleeping mat. Even when sleeping you should do so as the Buddha did. At that time, the karma of life and death will be exhausted and your body and mind, lying down, will be buddha. In this way, you will not be spending the Hour of the Mouse wastefully. During the Hour of the Cow (1 am to 3 am), you should deport yourself similarly.

Your body and mind are buddha. Do not waste the Hour of the Cow. As I said above, both in sitting and in lying down, do not deviate from the Way of the Buddha. In this manner, you will be alert in the Hour of the Cow, the karma of life and death is exhausted and your body and mind are buddha. Both standing and lying down are nothing but enlightenment. It is a great mistake to think that you have to practice *zazen* sincerely but need not be sincere the rest of the time. From the Hour of the Tiger to the end of the Hour of the Cow, one day and night, there is no time to deviate from the way of the practice of the Buddha. If you spend day and night practicing in accordance with the way of the buddha ancestors, 20 or 30 years, or your whole life will be nothing but this one day and night.

If you do not deviate from the teachings of the buddha ancestors or your teacher, once you cease to hold your body dear and enter the ocean of the vow of the Three Treasures[8], your body and mind will be nothing but the buddha. The karma of life and death (samsara) is immediately exhausted and you will repay your debt to your parents. It is said that the Buddha practiced for many lives during immeasurable *kalpas;* yet it was nothing but the practice of one day and night. Just do not leave the temple and do not stay in the homes of lay people for even one day.

Therefore, practice (*gyōji*)[9] is the Ōzanmai (King of Samadhis) of the buddha ancestors. If you really wish to become buddha in this present life, just practice continuously.

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1 *Jūniji* means 12 hours. One day and night used to be divided into 12 hours, and named after 12 animals in the same way as the years were. *Hōgo* means dharma words. This is an instruction for lay students who stayed at the monastery to practice with monks. The 12 hours are as follows:

The Hour of the Mouse	11pm– 1am
The Hour of the Cow	1am– 3am
The Hour of the Tiger	3am– 5am
The Hour of the Rabbit	5am– 7am
The Hour of the Dragon	7am– 9am

The Hour of the Snake	9am–11am
The Hour of the Horse	11am– 1pm
The Hour of the Sheep	1pm– 3pm
The Hour of the Monkey	3pm– 5pm
The Hour of the Chicken	5pm– 7pm
The Hour of the Dog	7pm– 9pm
The Hour of the Wild Boar	9pm–11pm

2 Daichi Sokei Zenji (1290–1366) became a monk under Kangan Giin (1217–1300) who was a disciple of Dōgen Zenji. After Kangan's death he visited various teachers. Later he practiced with Keizan Zenji for seven years. When he was 25 years old, he went to China and stayed there for 11 years. After returning to Japan he received transmission from Meihō Sotetsu (1277–1350) who was one of the main disciples of Keizan Zenji. Diachi is famous for his poetry.

3 Buddhas' vow to save all sentient beings is compared to the ocean because of its vastness.

4 Daichi emphasised concentration and wholeheartedness in each activity, moment by moment. That is enlightenment or awareness of each activity and each moment. In doing so, we transcend samsara, the karma of life and death. Each activity is not a step, means, or preparation for other things; rather each should be completed in the moment.

5 The 10 benefits of eating gruel are mentioned in *Makasōgi-ritsu* (The Precepts of Mahasamghika). Dōgen Zenji quoted them in his *Fushukuhanpō* (Manners for Eating Meals) which is a part of Eihei Shingi.

6 Here Daichi uses the word "*satori*". Satori is nothing but being aware or being alert in whatever activity you are doing right now, right here.

7 We should not be caught up even by the idea of buddha. In *Genjō-*

koan, Dōgen Zenji said, "When Buddhas are truly buddhas, they do not conceive of themselves as buddhas. Yet, they are enlightened buddhas, they are continuously actualizing buddha."

8 Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Buddha is the one who is aware of Reality. Dharma is Reality itself and the teaching about it. Sangha is the community of people who follow Buddha's teachings and practice manifesting Reality.

9 Literally *gyōji* means maintaining practice or continuous practice. Dōgen Zenji said in his *Shōbōgenzō Gyōji:* "In the great Way of the buddha ancestors, there is always incomparabIe continuous practice which revolves ceaselessly. Arousing bodhi mind, practice, awareness and nirvana form the circle of continuous practice without the slightest break. Therefore, it is neither one's own effort nor someone else's effort; this is undefiled continuous practice."

Appendixes

From the English Translation of Sōtō School Scriptures for Daily Services and Practice

Robe Verse (***Takkesa ge***)
How great, the robe of liberation,
a formless field of merit.
Wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teaching,
we free all living beings.

Sutra-Opening Verse (***Kaikyō ge***)
The unsurpassed, profound, and wondrous dharma
Is rarely met with, even in a hundred,
thousand, million kalpas.
Now we can see and hear it, accept and maintain it.
May we unfold the meaning of the
Tathagata's truth.

Four Vows (***Shigu seigan mon***)
Beings are numberless; I vow to free them.
Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end hem.
Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter hem.
The buddha way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it.

Heart Sutra (***Hannya shingyō***)
Full title: Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra (Maka hannya haramitta shingyo)

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw ◎ that all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering. Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself form. Sensations, perceptions, formations, and consciousness are also like this. Shariputra, all dharmas are marked by emptiness; they neither arise nor cease, are neither defiled nor pure, neither increase nor decrease. Therefore, given emptiness, there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no formation, no consciousness; no eyes, no ears, no nose, no

tongue, no body, no mind; no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of sight... no realm of mind consciousness. There is neither ignorance nor extinction of ignorance... neither old age and death, nor extinction of old age and death; no suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path; no knowledge and no attainment. With nothing to attain, a bodhisattva relies on *prajna paramita,* ◎ and thus the mind is without hindrance. Without hindrance, there is no fear. Far beyond all inverted views, one realizes nirvana. All buddhas of past, present, and future rely on *prajna paramita* ◎ and thereby attain unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. Therefore, know the *prajna paramita* as the great miraculous mantra, the great bright mantra, the supreme mantra, the incomparable mantra, which removes all suffering and is true, not false. Therefore we proclaim the *prajna paramita* mantra, the mantra that says: "Gate Gate ● Paragate Parasamgate ● Bodhi Svaha."

Universal Transference of Merit (*Fuekō*)
May this merit extend universally to all,
so that we together with all beings realize
the buddha way.

From the Roman Letter Transliterations of Sōtō School Scriptures for Daily Services and Practice

***Takkesa ge* (Robe Verse)**
Dai sai gedap-puku
musō fuku den e
hi bu nyorai kyo
ko do shoshu jo

***Kaikyō ge* (Sutra-Opening Verse)**
Mu jo jin jin mi myo ho
Hyaku sen man go nan so gu
Ga kon ken mon toku ju ji
Gan ge nyo rai shin jitsu gi.

***Shigu seigan mon* (Four Vows)**
Shujō muhen sei gan do
Bon-no mujin sei gan dan
Ho mon muryo sei gan gaku
Butsu do mujo sei gan jo.

***Hannya shingyo* (Hannya shingyō)**
Full title: *Maka hannya haramitta shingyō* (Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra)

Kan ji zai bo sa gyo jin han-nya ha ra mi ta ji sho ken ◎ go on kai ku do is-sai ku yaku sha ri shi shiki fu i ku ku fu i shiki shiki soku ze ku ku soku ze shiki ju so gyo shiki yaku bu nyo ze sha ri shi ze sho ho ku so fu sho fu metsu fu ku fu jo fu zo fu gen ze ko ku chu mu shiki mu ju so gyo shiki mu gen ni bi zes-shin ni mu shiki sho ko mi soku ho mu gen kai nai shi mu i shiki kai mu mu myo yaku mu mu myo jin nai shi mu ro shi yaku mu ro shi jin mu ku shu metsu do mu chi yaku mu toku i mu sho tok-ko bo dai sat-ta e han-nya ha ra mi ta ◎ ko shin mu kei ge mu kei ge ko mu u ku fu on ri is-sai ten do mu so ku gyo ne han san ze sho butsu e han-nya ha ra mi ta ◎ ko toku a noku ta ra san myaku san bo dai ko chi han-nya ha ra mi ta ze dai jin shu ze dai myo shu ze mu jo shu ze mu to do shu no jo is-sai ku shin jitsu fu ko ko setsu han-nya ha ra mi ta shu soku setsu shu watsu gya tei gya tei ● ha ra gya tei hara so gya tei ● bo ji sowa ka han-nya shin gyo.

***Fuekō* (Universal Transferences)**
Negawaku wa kono kudoku o motte,
amaneku issai ni oyoboshi,
warera to shujo to, mina tomo ni butsudo o jozen koto o.

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